



# WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Combined State Plan  
July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2020



- INSERT LETTER TO LES RANGE FROM GOVERNOR

DRAFT

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## SECTION I

# WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

The State of Tennessee is submitting a Combined State Plan (CSP) in which the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) is the authorized and signatory entity designated to receive funds under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Through a strong collaboration with the Tennessee Departments of Human Services (DHS), Economic and Community Development (TNECD), and Education (TNED) we have developed Tennessee's strategic and operational plans for the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), (Public Law 113-128) which was enacted on July 22, 2014, and under which the following Titles represent the statutory WIOA core programs:

- Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- Youth program (Title I),
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), and
- Wagner-Peyser Act program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- Vocational Rehabilitation program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

The partner programs listed below are included in the planning elements:

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))



## SECTION II: STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

# ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

Since 2001, the funding of the public workforce system has declined from approximately \$5 billion to approximately \$2.5 billion in recent years. This decrease highlights the necessity for new strategies and operational partnerships in order to improve customer service, functionally align business and jobseeker services, and minimize duplicative programs and services. Amongst these changes, the best measures of change value are the ability to terminate ineffective and obsolete protocols and procedures in addition to saving resources for better use by the workforce system.

Tennessee has recovered <\$25 million> of potential Unemployment Insurance (UI) overpayments through the deployment of new software and technology (SAS, TOPS) thus causing positive impacts on Tennessee's UI trust fund. In addition, the state has reduced the needed federal outlay of recurring funds, by almost <\$18 mil> per annum, for statutory programs through our recently conducted Voluntary Buyout Program. These achievements speak directly to the long-standing strategy of achieving economic self-sufficiency and demonstrating conservative fiscal leadership in and by the state of Tennessee.

As it pertains to fiscal integrity, Tennessee won "State of the Year" for economic development in both 2013 and 2014 by Business Facilities magazine, and in 2014 set an all-time job commitment record of 24,221 new jobs. In 2015, the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's (TNECD) business development team landed 161 company commitments, which represented 25,837 new job commitments, also setting a new record. In addition to the new job commitments, these companies are investing \$5.5 billion in capital in the state, also setting a new record.

In 2015, foreign direct investments totaled \$2.25 billion in capital and created 7,815 new job commitments. Investments by Japanese-based companies alone totaled \$1.02 billion, followed by Canadian-based companies with investments of \$478.8 million and Chinese-based companies of \$298 million. TNECD's 2015 projects have a forecasted direct economic output of \$4.71 billion over the next ten years and a total economic output of \$9.86 billion.

The collaborative support of conservative fiscal behaviors across the state has shown increased opportunity for service alignment in several agencies. The results have been increasingly favorable for the workforce development successes, improvements and areas for new growth. The following analysis provides an in-depth view of the economic and workforce characteristics for the State of Tennessee and its three regions (East, Middle and West), as well as information on Tennessee's infrastructure, policy development, and workforce activities which support its strategies.

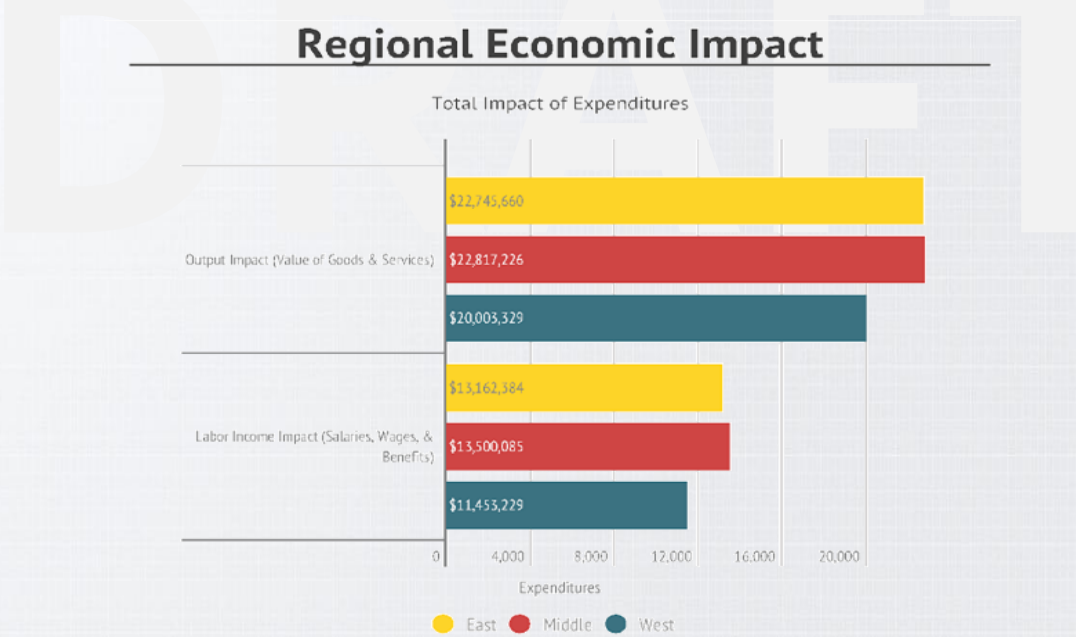
# ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

- (A) Economic Analysis.** The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specifics areas identified by the State. This must include
- i. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

## Statewide WIA Impact and Investment Return

Existing analyses from WIA expenditures in Tennessee show many areas of growth, as in both labor income and state and federal taxes. We can see potential growth and continuous improvement in our statewide activities to improve the Tennessee economy and align the stakeholders, but also to contribute to the national impact and return on investment.

During the 2013-2014 program year, Tennessee WIA made \$47,634,085 in direct expenditures in total throughout the state as a result of normal operations of providing job training and employment services to local citizens. As shown below, this resulted in the total production of goods and services (output) valued at over \$90.2 million, total salaries, wages, and benefits of \$49.5 million, a total of 1,507 full- and part-time jobs, and federal, state and local taxes of \$10.5 million.



## Total Impacts of Tennessee WIA Expenditures, 2013-2014

Output (Value of Goods and Services)	\$90,241,314
Labor Income (Salaries, Wages, and Benefits)	\$49,510,960
Employment (Jobs, Full- and Part-Time)	1,507



Federal, State and Local Taxes	\$10,524,604
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# ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

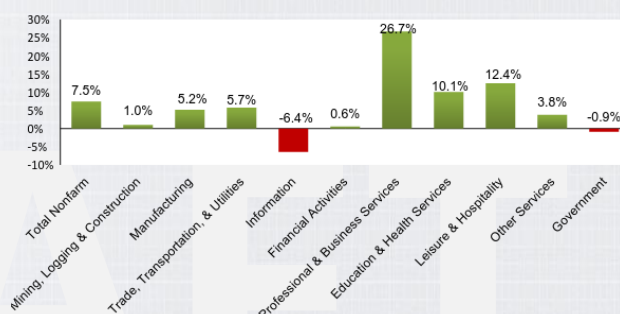
## Tennessee Regional Economic Workforce Analysis: State, Region and LWDA Data

### Analysis of Tennessee Employment 2013 to 2014

Tennessee's average total nonfarm employment increased 2.1 percent from 2013 to 2014, adding 56,600 jobs. The industry sector with the largest total and percent increase was professional and business services, followed by leisure and hospitality. These two sectors combined to add 29,600 jobs. Since 2009, Tennessee has added 195,600 jobs, a 7.5 percent increase. Professional and business services gained 78,500 jobs during that time, more than double any other industry sector. Only information and government experienced declines since 2009.

### Industry Employment Change (thousands)

Industry Sector	Change 2013-2014		Change 2009-2014	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	56.6	2.10%	195.6	7.50%
<b>Good Producing</b>	10	2.30%	17.3	4.10%
Mining, Logging & Construction	3.1	2.80%	1.1	1.00%
Manufacturing	6.8	2.10%	16	5.20%
<b>Private Service Providing</b>	46.9	2.40%	182.1	10.30%
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	9.5	1.60%	32.1	5.70%
Information	-0.2	-0.50%	-3	-6.40%
Financial Activities	3.3	2.40%	0.8	0.60%
Professional & Business Services	19.2	5.40%	78.5	26.70%
Education & Health Services	4.3	1.10%	36.9	10.10%
Leisure & Hospitality	10.4	3.60%	32.8	12.40%
Other Services	0.3	0.30%	3.9	3.80%
<b>Government</b>	-0.2	0.00%	-3.7	-0.90%



### Tennessee Annual Nonfarm Job Growth (thousands)



### Tennessee Total Nonfarm (thousands)





# ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

## Economic Analysis – Tennessee Employment Projections 2014-2022

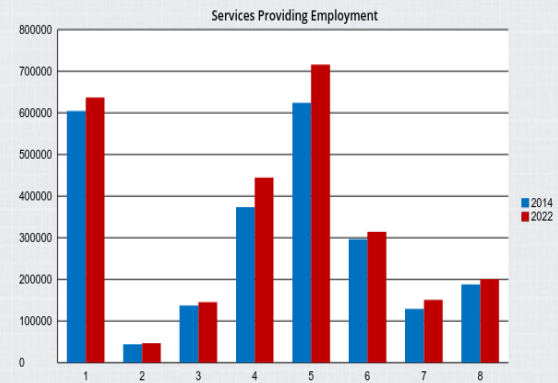
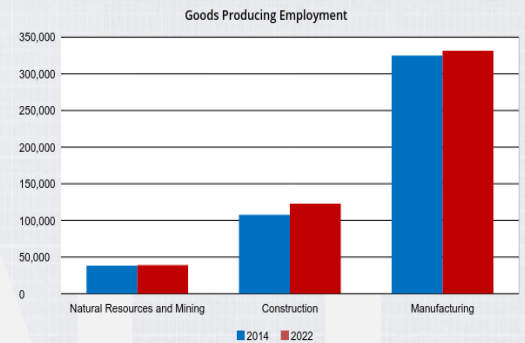
Tennessee's total employment remains on track to exceed 3.3 million by 2022. Levels of employment continue to rise after the 2007-2009 recession that saw a steep decline in employment.

The services providing industry is expected to experience a favorable annual increase of 1.3 percent, with the professional and business services sector leading with a rate of 2.2 percent. In addition to professional services gains, other services (except government) and education and health services are expected to grow 1.9 and 1.7 percent respectively.

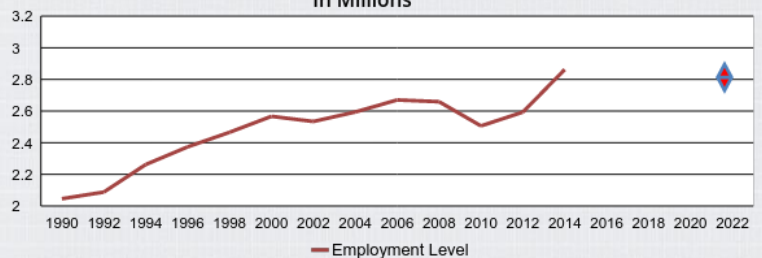
The goods producing industry is expected to increase by 0.60 percent. Construction continues to prosper with a healthy expected gain of 1.7 percent. However, natural resources and mining and manufacturing are expected to be among the slowest growing sectors with rates of 0.2 and 0.3 percent.

### Industry Projections

Industry Title	2012	2014	2022	Change 2012-2014	Change 2014-2022	2014-2022 Growth Rates
<b>Total All Industries</b>	2,949,450	3,051,320	3,336,400	101,870	285,080	9.3
<b>Goods Producing</b>	453,110	470,760	493,590	17,650	22,830	4.9
Natural Resources & Mining	34,820	38,220	38,920	3,410	700	1.8
Construction	104,800	107,680	122,980	2,880	15,300	14.2
Manufacturing	313,500	324,860	331,690	11,360	6,830	2.1
<b>Services Providing</b>	2,316,080	2,396,120	2,655,340	80,040	259,230	10.8
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	587,270	604,350	636,630	17,080	32,280	5.3
Information	43,200	43,810	46,980	610	3,170	7.2
Financial Activities	133,810	136,920	145,570	3,110	8,650	6.3
Professional and Business Services	336,450	373,780	444,600	37,330	70,820	19
Education & Health Services	615,400	623,910	716,120	8,500	92,210	14.8
Leisure and Hospitality	277,050	296,410	314,100	19,360	17,690	6
Other Services (except Government)	138,040	129,330	150,530	-8,710	21,200	16.4
<b>Government</b>	184,850	187,610	200,810	2,760	13,200	7



**Total All Industries  
In Millions**





# ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

## Industry Growth and New Job Creation

Tennessee has experienced significant employment growth since the recovery from the recession. As listed in table 1, the state's expected major growth sectors include professional and business services (19 percent), other services except government (16.4), education and health services (14.8), and construction (14.2). Twenty industries in Tennessee are expected to add the most new jobs from 2014 to 2022.

### *Tennessee Three Digit Industries Expected to Add the Most New Jobs 2014 to 2022*

Industry Rank	NAICS Industry Code	Industry Title	Number of New Jobs	Percent Change 2014-2022
1	561000	Administrative and Support Services	38,370	18.4
2	621000	Ambulatory Health Care Services	33,690	23.8
3	611000	Educational Services	28,150	11.6
4	541000	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	21,750	18.1
5	813000	Religious, Grant making, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations	19,320	27.9
6	622000	Hospitals	14,630	11.6
7	336000	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	13,760	21.6
8	722000	Food Services and Drinking Places	13,230	5.7
9	238000	Specialty Trade Contractors	12,610	18.7
10	624000	Social Assistance	11,110	23.1
11	551000	Management of Companies and Enterprises	8,440	22.2
12	923000	Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	7,450	6.6
13	484000	Truck Transportation	6,390	11.3
14	446000	Health and Personal Care Stores	6,180	26.8
15	623000	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	4,630	7.2
16	452000	General Merchandise Stores	4,620	6.5
17	522000	Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	4,010	7.6
18	333000	Machinery Manufacturing	3,950	15.5
19	524000	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	3,710	9.2
20	425000	Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers	2,910	14.7

Source: Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Labor Market Information Section. Tennessee Employment Projections 2014 to 2022, State and LWDA, unpublished. [jobs4tn.gov]

## ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The 20 industries above are projected to create a total of 258,080 jobs, or 91 percent of all expected job creation through 2022. Just the top 10 industries should create 206,080 jobs, or 72 percent of the total. In the top ten are just two industries in the goods producing sector- transportation equipment manufacturing and construction sector specialty trade contractors. In the services providing sector, the most populous industry sector is professional and business services, including administrative and support services and professional, scientific, and technical services. The next largest sector is education and health services, including ambulatory health care and hospitals, educational services, and social assistance. The leisure and hospitality sector will create more than 13,000 food service jobs, and in the other services sector, religious, civic and professional organizations will add employment as well. Additional mapping of industry projections and workforce expenditures during 2013 - 2014 show alignments already trending heavily toward what citizens and businesses can expect from employer services and in-demand projections in Tennessee's development of workforce resources, as follows:

Top Ten Industries Affected by Program Expenditures

	Labor Income Impact	Output Impact
Employment Services	\$5,787,729	\$48,695,295
Offices of Physicians, Dentists, & Other Health Practitioners	\$1,225,224	\$1,972,470
Private Hospitals	\$1,116,017	\$2,252,652
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$884,451	\$2,548,442
Wholesale Trade Businesses	\$653,615	\$1,627,363
Management of Companies & Enterprises	\$359,779	\$792,475
Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping, & Payroll Services	\$356,251	\$663,140
Monetary Authorities & Depository Credit Intermediation Activities	\$341,612	\$2,072,467
Nursing & Residential Facilities	\$328,009	\$604,258
Retail Stores - Motor Vehicle & Parts	\$309,894	\$569,538

An in-depth report on the Economic and Workforce Analysis in Tennessee is available in Appendix A. This information includes an analysis of Tennessee Employment 2013-2014, Tennessee Employment Projections 2014-2022, Industry Growth and New Job Creation for East, Middle and West Regions, Gap Analysis for East, Middle and West Regions, and Tennessee Employer Skills and Knowledge Requirement.

## ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

### ***Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis.***

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of –

- A. *The State's Workforce Development activities.* Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system partners.

Focused on achieving the Governor's Drive to 55 initiative, all training activities and education practices are aligned with

- B. *The Strengths and Weakness of Workforce Development Activities.* Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

In preparation for WIOA implementation, Tennessee's workforce development activities were analyzed by its core and partner program staff. Initial exploration showed the significant growth of new industry and jobs required increased partnership and coordinated communication. In addition, the team was able to identify a great strength in customer-centered customer service, the support of local government and system flexibility as pillars in the workforce systems. Additionally, the availability of program data has provided much needed support for the development of service strategies and goal attainment across all programs.

Some areas for growth and improvement have been identified in asset mapping of local and state level resources, common strategy development, and meeting the growing employer demand for skilled and qualified employees. Efforts to improve these challenges have been made through hosting regional meetings with local partners to identify services provided and opportunities for increased alignment. In addition, coordinated data sharing and communication will remain areas of focus for improvement and innovation. The use of data while integration, agility, and ability to serve those with significant barriers have always been a focus in the workforce system, this common thread has helped shape the focus and continuation of workforce development activities statewide.



SECTION II: STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

# ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

C. *State Workforce Development Capacity.* Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

**Target Populations**

Of all the recent data run for these analyses, the poverty rates deserve much concern. Poverty impacts employment perhaps above all else, as it affects virtually all the support factors involved in becoming self-sufficient, such as health, transportation, child care, education, and positive attitudes. The need for active listening, speaking, and social perceptiveness are a must in the current workforce as newly graduating students seem to lack the necessary soft skills for workplace success. The ability to communicate effectively while glean necessary information for assigned tasks has become more crucial as the skills gap widens. The state educational focus on improvement in reading comprehension is validated by its high ranking as a vital employment skill. It is an enormous task to eliminate the barriers to employment due to poverty. Individuals in poverty often are most concerned with real shelter, health, and family. Given these facts, it is an enormous task to prepare those in poverty with work readiness, career, and training services.

**Required Skills**

Category	Projected Year Employment	Openings Due to Growth	Replacements
Active Listening	620,506	19,396	11,748
Speaking	615,215	20,001	11,490
Reading Comprehension	358,712	11,393	6,465
Critical Thinking	221,946	7,597	4,204
Social Perceptiveness	179,595	6,177	3,754



# ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

Given these facts, it is an enormous task to prepare those in poverty with work readiness, career, and training services which are most likely to match employer needs. Under WIOA, Tennessee is embarking on new emphases to serve the most in need.

## *East Region Poverty Rates*

Area	Poverty Estimate, All Ages	Population, All Ages	% of Population in Poverty
LWDA 1	70335	375,997	18.7
LWDA 2	91010	415,493	20.1
LWDA 3	77218	448,644	17.2
LWDA 4	83429	492,169	17.0
LWDA 5	105416	624,935	16.9
<b>Total East Region</b>	<b>427408</b>	<b>2,393,238</b>	<b>17.8</b>

## *Middle Region Poverty Rates*

Area	Poverty Estimate, All Ages	Population, All Ages	% of Population in Poverty
LWDA 6	41353	235,002	17.6
LWDA 7	49348	245,476	20.1
LWDA 8	84677	765,992	11.1
LWDA 9	183546	1,090,631	16.8
LWDA 10	43858	248,936	17.6
<b>Total Middle Region</b>	<b>402782</b>	<b>2,586,037</b>	<b>15.6</b>

## *West Region Poverty Rates*

Area	Poverty Estimate, All Ages	Population, All Ages	% of Population in Poverty
LWDA 11	52045	251,519	20.7
LWDA 12	65830	340,744	19.3
LWDA 13	217183	977,814	22.2
<b>Total West Region</b>	<b>335058</b>	<b>1570077</b>	<b>21.34</b>

# ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Disability Program Navigator (DPN), and the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), grants received by the TDLWD, are national focused grants which have served to put in place collaborative and sustained services to disability populations through: DHS - Division of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Division of Rehabilitation Services; the Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities; the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities; Future Program, University of Tennessee; the Department of Corrections, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development – Division of Workforce Development and Veterans. These joint resources and collaborative efforts have put the state workforce system in a better position to enhance services, improve employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and increase the likelihood of achieving successful performance outcomes. Among the disability populations in Tennessee, as the data below shows, those currently not in the labor force are primary to workforce services, where 34%, or over 300,000 individuals need to be reached with transition, career, and appropriate training services. We must do so through these sustained partnerships which are emerging from the implementation of WIOA.

## Disability Status of the Workforce

Area	Civilian, Non-institutional Pop. (18-64)	Total	In the labor force					
			Employed			Unemployed		
			Total	Disability	No Disability	Total	Disability	No Disability
LWDA 1	228,442	163,077	149,552	10,450	139,102	13,525	2,270	11,255
LWDA 2	271,527	191,267	171,246	13,027	158,219	20,021	3,566	16,455
LWDA 3	283,166	215,737	201,023	10,132	190,891	14,714	1,700	13,014
LWDA 4	286,606	199,128	179,053	12,085	166,968	20,075	3,009	17,066
LWDA 5	379,342	280,293	252,973	17,093	235,880	27,320	4,685	22,635
LWDA 6	138,043	97,807	88,531	6,875	81,656	9,276	1,628	7,648
LWDA 7	147,105	100,363	90,358	5,622	84,736	10,005	1,281	8,724
LWDA 8	444,176	339,145	313,639	17,193	296,446	25,506	2,991	22,515
LWDA 9	688,991	543,839	500,701	22,448	478,253	43,138	5,003	38,135
LWDA 10	145,912	107,066	96,164	6,606	89,558	10,902	1,566	9,336
LWDA 11	150,347	105,073	91,817	5,766	86,051	13,256	1,788	11,468
LWDA 12	200,063	143,356	126,545	8,346	118,199	16,811	2,380	14,431
LWDA 13	607,156	464,444	412,703	21,483	391,220	51,741	5,755	45,986
<b>East</b>	<b>1,449,083</b>	<b>1,049,502</b>	<b>953,847</b>	<b>62,787</b>	<b>891,060</b>	<b>95,655</b>	<b>15,230</b>	<b>80,425</b>
<b>Middle</b>	<b>1,564,227</b>	<b>1,188,220</b>	<b>1,089,393</b>	<b>58,744</b>	<b>1,030,649</b>	<b>98,827</b>	<b>12,469</b>	<b>86,358</b>
<b>West</b>	<b>957,566</b>	<b>712,873</b>	<b>631,065</b>	<b>35,595</b>	<b>595,470</b>	<b>81,808</b>	<b>9,923</b>	<b>71,885</b>
<b>Tennessee</b>	<b>3,970,876</b>	<b>2,950,595</b>	<b>2,674,305</b>	<b>157,126</b>	<b>2,517,179</b>	<b>276,290</b>	<b>37,622</b>	<b>238,668</b>

# ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The table below provides information on the disability status of the population. Of those not in the labor force, about a third in each region have disability status.

## *Disability Status of the Workforce*

Area	Civilian, Non-institutional Pop. (18-64)	Not in the labor force				
		Total	Disability	No Disability	Percentage	No Disability
LWDA 1	228,442	65365	26506	38859	40.60%	59.40%
LWDA 2	271,527	80260	35339	44921	44.00%	56.00%
LWDA 3	283,166	67429	18885	48544	28.00%	72.00%
LWDA 4	286,606	87478	33978	53500	38.80%	61.20%
LWDA 5	379,342	99049	36455	62594	36.80%	63.20%
LWDA 6	138,043	40236	15307	24929	38.00%	62.00%
LWDA 7	147,105	46742	17575	29167	37.60%	62.40%
LWDA 8	444,176	105031	28325	76706	27.00%	73.00%
LWDA 9	688,991	145152	38331	106821	26.40%	73.60%
LWDA 10	145,912	38846	14919	23927	38.40%	61.60%
LWDA 11	150,347	45274	16590	28684	36.60%	63.40%
LWDA 12	200,063	56707	22314	34393	39.30%	60.70%
LWDA 13	607,156	142712	42965	99747	30.10%	69.90%
<b>East</b>	<b>1,449,083</b>	<b>399581</b>	<b>151163</b>	<b>248418</b>	<b>37.80%</b>	<b>62.20%</b>
<b>Middle</b>	<b>1,564,227</b>	<b>376007</b>	<b>114457</b>	<b>261550</b>	<b>30.40%</b>	<b>69.60%</b>
<b>West</b>	<b>957,566</b>	<b>244693</b>	<b>81869</b>	<b>162824</b>	<b>33.50%</b>	<b>66.50%</b>
<b>Tennessee</b>	<b>3,970,876</b>	<b>1020281</b>	<b>347489</b>	<b>672792</b>	<b>34.10%</b>	<b>65.90%</b>

Tennessee's Vocational Rehabilitation Services program, under the guidance of DHS, will continue to have a vital role in this endeavor to increase participation levels in each region, deliver appropriate menus of services whether transition, career or training, and increase the likelihood of self-sustaining employment.



## SECTION II: STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

# STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

Education has a direct influence on jobs. Governor Bill Haslam is committed to improvement in teaching, learning, retention and graduation, and providing a high expectation and a high standard of education for every student. With improvement to education, Tennesseans will have a path to better jobs. Competition for bringing businesses and jobs to the state is intense and the single best recruiting tool for future job growth is a high-quality workforce flowing out of educational achievements. The Governor's top three priorities for Tennessee include:

## ***Jobs and Economic Goal:***

### ***Make TN the #1 State in the Southeast for Jobs***

*"Education is a top priority in Tennessee. Our progress in K-12 and focus on workforce development makes it clear that Tennessee is supporting the development of a better-educated and highly trained workforce on a long-term basis."*

***// Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam***

The overarching goal for the Governor's administration is making Tennessee the number one state in the Southeast for high quality jobs. The Governor is invested in the first-hand perspective of his citizens and constantly seeks opportunities to meet and listen to those who are "on the ground" creating jobs in the state. From meeting with small business owners, economic development professionals, and local government and community leaders to visiting job sites and touring factories, the Governor wants to hear directly how state government could improve strategies and practices to increase the number of jobs in the state. This combined Plan outlines the collaborative efforts that will guide a focused partnership between the workforce system, specifically Title I, II, III and IV, and economic development in growing existing business and attracting new business to the state. The functional alignment outlined in this Plan will support economic development by ensuring all Tennesseans have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of employers now and in the future. The five objectives listed below provide the framework by which the Governor seeks to make Tennessee's workforce reign superior in the Southeast:

***Objective I – Identify, assess, and certify skills for successful careers***

***Objective II – Promote economic development by connecting workforce development with job creation and growth***

***Objective III – Increase employer engagement with the workforce development system***

***Objective IV – Expand programs of study that bring together a sequence of career-focused courses that start in high school and extend through college***

***Objective V – Increase work-integrated learning***



## STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

### ***Education and Workforce Development Goal:*** *Create a more seamless path from high school, post-secondary education or training to the workforce*

As a strong advocate for education reform, Governor Haslam understands that this is the pipeline to a successful and ever-growing workforce. He exemplifies this commitment by working alongside teachers, parents, and education leaders to ensure that the innovative changes which have been made in recent years to the K-12 and higher education systems are implemented effectively and that the state successfully capitalizes on the momentum that presently exists in education. In addition, Governor Haslam is former chair of the Education and Workforce Committee for the National Governor's Association and continues to serve on this committee. This committee has jurisdiction over issues in the area of education (including early childhood, K-12 and postsecondary) as well as in the areas of workforce development. Members of the committee ensure that the governor's views are represented in the shaping of federal policy.

In Tennessee, Governor Haslam has made college access and success a priority by committing to helping each region raise educational attainment rates and enhancing its workforce development efforts through innovative public/private partnerships. He knows that to prepare Tennesseans for a competitive 21st century economy, Tennessee must create a more seamless path from high school, post-secondary education or training, to the workforce. The workforce system plays a crucial role in assisting with building the skills and knowledge capacity of the citizens of Tennessee. All Tennesseans will have access to the same basic workforce services regardless of the access point and educational resources invested by the workforce system will focus on credentials and certifications to pursue a career path.

***Objective I*** – Leverage resources, including WIOA statewide and local funding and other non-WIOA funds, and partnerships across departments and programs to aid in developing more seamless paths from training into the workforce

***Objective II*** – Increase the number of credentials and certificates

***Objective III*** – Improve the availability and quality of career and education guidance for students of all ages in high school and postsecondary institutions

## STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

### ***Conservative Fiscal Leadership Goal:***

*Eliminating duplication and leveraging dollars to provide more opportunities to existing job seekers and the emerging workforce*

Governor Haslam has a track record of sound, public and private sector financial management as well as successful job recruitment. It is with this experience that he has been able to pull the state through difficult economic times while keeping taxes low and fostering a business-friendly environment critical to continued job growth. The Governor understands that families and businesses have made sacrifices to sustain the state's economy, and likewise, state government has been forced to prioritize its fiscal choices. By making tough decisions, managing the state budget conservatively, and guiding the state's finances into a position of strength, the Governor is helping the state compete in the global economy and successfully attract the "jobs of the future" to Tennessee. The workforce system's functional alignment will assist in eliminating duplication and leveraging dollars to provide more opportunities to job seekers and the emerging workforce. The following objectives provide more details on how the state plans to preserve its fiscal integrity and increase opportunities for the existing and emerging workforce:

***Objective I*** – *Improve job search and placement services for unemployed and underemployed workers*

***Objective II*** – *Establish cost-effective co-investment models, across government funding streams and other funding streams*

# STATE STRATEGY

### ***Industry and Sector Partnerships***

In an effort to support the booming economic growth in the state as well as the three aforementioned goals set out by Governor Haslam, TDLWD has continued to cultivate and expand and its partnership with other state departments. The governor's Job and Economic Development Goal will improve and undergird the partnership between the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) and TDLWD. Together, these two agencies as well as other departments, seek to achieve two main strategies:

1. Develop a multi-agency partnership to address workforce needs across the state.
2. Establish a framework to create innovative workforce partnerships and game-changing education reform for skills in high-demand.

The Department of Economic and Community Development is committed to fulfilling Governor Haslam's vision for Tennessee to be the #1 location for high quality jobs in the Southeast. Under the leadership of Commissioner Randy Boyd, TNECD has created five goals to fulfill this commitment. They are as follows:

1. 55% of job commitments will pay above the average wage of the county the project is located within
2. Tennessee will be top 2 in per capita personal income in the Southeast
3. Tennessee will have the highest capital investment per capita in the Southeast
4. Tennessee will have the lowest unemployment rate in the Southeast
5. Tennessee will have zero distressed counties by 2025

In order to achieve these objectives, the TNECD is utilizing the following 6 strategies:

1. New business recruitment
2. Business expansion
3. Growing entrepreneurship
4. Community development
5. Aligning with education
6. Rural development

Jobs Base Camps continue to be a key element to TNECD's success. With 9 regions strategically placed across the state, business development team members are actively working with businesses within their communities on a daily basis. Each jobs based camp works with local partners to develop and/or revise a regional economic develop plan and align existing federal and state resources around that plan. Understanding workforce is essential for economic development success and reinforces the necessity for all state partners to work together in unison to respond to the workforce needs of recruitment and expansion projects. To fill this need, Workforce360° was designed.



# STATE STRATEGY

Workforce360° is a project based system that works directly with companies interested in recruitment and expansion projects in Tennessee. Region-based tactical teams will identify workforce gaps and streamline solutions across the state by utilizing state department communications, interaction and resources. Additionally, teams provide a timely response to immediate business workforce needs, as well as strategic planning for long-term requirements.

Workforce360° is a multi-agency partnership and involves specific, strategic roles from each to target and engage business and industry leaders. These state departments are as follows:

STATE PARTNERS	PARTNER FUNCTIONS
Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development	Workforce is essential to economic development. A member of the regional team will be designated as your project manager to bring the correct players to the table, as well as ensure that solution strategies are actionable and achieved.
Tennessee Department of Education	Building a future pipeline is vital for continued success. Working with the Department of Education, each company will be able to expose and excite future generations to join their team. Work-based learning, early post-secondary opportunities and pursuing industry recognized certifications are just a few of the opportunities students are currently taking advantage of to ensure they are career and college ready tomorrow.
Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development	A multi-faceted department, this resource is able to supply prospects, provide recruitment tools, pre-screen and test applicants, interview candidates and provide an international job posting service with <a href="#">Jobs4TN</a> .
Tennessee Department of Human Services	With a client base of over 500,000 in Tennessee, DHS is charged with evaluating, vetting and providing quality candidates for industry. With up-skill and training dollars available, these candidates are ready and prepared to enter the workforce.
Tennessee Community Colleges	Established to focus on two-year degrees, the 13 community colleges are an ideal asset for any company to utilize. Quick to react, the main campuses and satellite locations are able to produce programs for short-term training, certifications and associate's degrees.
Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology	With 27 main locations across Tennessee, these institutes are designed to produce the technical workforce of tomorrow and upskill the workforce of today. With an ability to quickly adapt and customize training, the TCATs are a go-to location for all workforce technical training needs.
Tennessee Department of Veteran Affairs	



# STATE STRATEGY

In 2014, Governor Haslam created the Workforce Subcabinet, a collaborative team dedicated to develop and oversee implementation of a three year strategic plan that aligns state resources in an effort to attain the Drive to 55 goals. The Subcabinet is comprised of the following state departments and leaders: Commissioner Randy Boyd, Chair (Economic and Community Development), Commissioner Raquel Hatter (Human Services), Commissioner Candice McQueen (Education), Interim Vice Chancellor David Gregory (Tennessee Board of Regents), Commissioner Many-Bears Grinder (Department of Veteran Affairs), Dr. Russ Deaton (Tennessee Higher Education Commission), and Commissioner Burns Phillips (Labor and Workforce Development). In addition to the initial responsibility of overseeing the Tennessee Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP), the Governor's Workforce Subcabinet has developed multiple strategies to aide in the alignment of workforce, education and industry.

Tennessee is actively addressing the challenge to ensure a skilled workforce is available for the newly relocated and expanding companies across the state. In 2014, Governor Bill Haslam challenged Tennessee with the Drive to 55— a statewide initiative to equip 55% of Tennesseans with a postsecondary degree or certificate by the year 2025. Tennessee Promise, Tennessee Reconnect and Tennessee LEAP are three programs under the Drive to 55 initiative which implement strategies to ensure access to postsecondary and to ensure the needs of industry are aligned with curriculum in the classroom.

**Tennessee Promise** offers high school students two years of tuition-free community or technical college and a mentor to help them through the process. Tennessee is the only state in the nation to provide this opportunity. The inaugural high school graduating class of 2015 included participation by nearly 60,000 high school seniors, with 15,895 students using Tennessee Promise benefits beginning in the fall of 2015. Community colleges across the state reported a 14% increase of students enrolling as a full time student directly after high school as compared to fall 2014. As a result of Tennessee Promise, Tennessee leads the nation in FAFSA completion, comprising 40% of the entire country's growth in FAFSA filings in 2015.

**Tennessee Reconnect** offers adults the opportunity to attend and earn a certificate at any of the 27 Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) completely free of tuition and fees. More than 10,000 adult Tennesseans completed the online interest forms and 4,921 adult students have entered the inaugural program in fall 2015. This accounts for an 18% increase in enrollment for adults across Tennessee. Of those enrolled with some college credit but no degree 105,000 or over 50% are predicted to complete their program of study and 25,000 participants may have enough credit hours to graduate.

# STATE STRATEGY

**Tennessee Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP)** is a \$10M grant opportunity designed to ensure postsecondary institutions are producing the skills and credentials that Tennessee employers actually need through alignment of education and industry. Drive to 55 is not just a mission for higher education, but a mission for Tennessee's future workforce and economic development. In LEAP's first year of operation (2014), 12 grants were awarded allowing Tennesseans from 51 counties to participate in 15,584 training and workforce development opportunities created by LEAP grants. Some highlights of the impact of this program are as follows:

- 1,591 high school students have enrolled in courses that have been initiated or expanded by LEAP programs as of December 2015. Students completing these courses will be eligible to apply their training to earn college credit in a variety of high-demand fields, such as advanced manufacturing, electrical engineering, and mechatronics. These students will serve as the foundation for new workforce pipelines that will benefit the state for years to come.
- 630 students have enrolled in community college and TCAT programs supported by LEAP-funded equipment and instructors. These students are eligible to earn Mechatronics and Industrial Maintenance certificates or an Associate of Applied Science degree.
- 13,363 students across middle school, secondary, and postsecondary education levels have engaged in LEAP-funded extracurricular programming, including career readiness initiatives, work-based learning experiences, academic clubs, and career exploration programs.

The Tennessee Longitudinal Data System (TDLS) connects an individual's employment history with data beginning at entry to Pre-K through high school, college, and over the individual's education and skills development life cycles. The system's capabilities will allow the Partners, as well as a consumer-facing interaction to compute performance metrics for federal and state accountability and compliance, display information to the general public, and provide vital information for researchers and evaluators of WIOA programs and Tennessee workforce initiatives, such as those undertaken by the Governor's Workforce Sub-Cabinet and its committees.

The Partners in the work to further integrate and improve TDLS include the Tennessee Departments of Labor and Workforce Development, Education, Children's Services, and the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; as well as the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and the University of Tennessee's Center for Business and Economic Research.

All of the core partners also will have performance accountability metrics for each program, especially to further assess how high school achievement, as well as educational attainment overall, impacts skills development and the likelihood of obtaining demand-and industry-level employment at sustaining wages. These dashboards will focus on both pre-program and post-program outcomes.

Serving as the State's primary vehicle to drive cross-sharing and down-sharing of data relevant to the Drive to 55 initiative and Pathways TN, TDLS will leverage current and future investments and developments to provide: on-demand data that are as real-time as possible; recurring intelligence to drive strategic priorities of the Governor's Office and state agencies; user-friendly tools that assist trained users in generating pre-designed and customized reports from TDLS data; and information necessary to assist agencies in articulating "stories" for external customers about critical "focus populations" and Tennessee's citizens as a whole.

# STATE STRATEGY

### *Career Pathways*

In June 2012, Tennessee was selected to join a multi-state consortium, the Pathways to Prosperity Network, a multistate initiative aimed to address the “skills gap” that threatens the preparedness of young Americans entering the workforce. Entrance into this consortium led to the founding of Pathways Tennessee. The mission of Pathways Tennessee is to provide Tennessee students rigorous academic/career pathways, which are linked to economic and labor market needs and trends. Rooted in the necessity for a well-rounded and balanced approach to preparation, Pathways Tennessee developed and maintains a state level board comprised of various state government departments and private/sector leaders in business. These organizations include:

- Department of Economic & Community Development
- Department of Education
- Department of Labor & Workforce Development
- Governor’s Office
- Tennessee Board of Regents System
- State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE)
- Tennessee Business Roundtable
- Tennessee Higher Education Commission
- Tennessee State Board of Education
- Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association

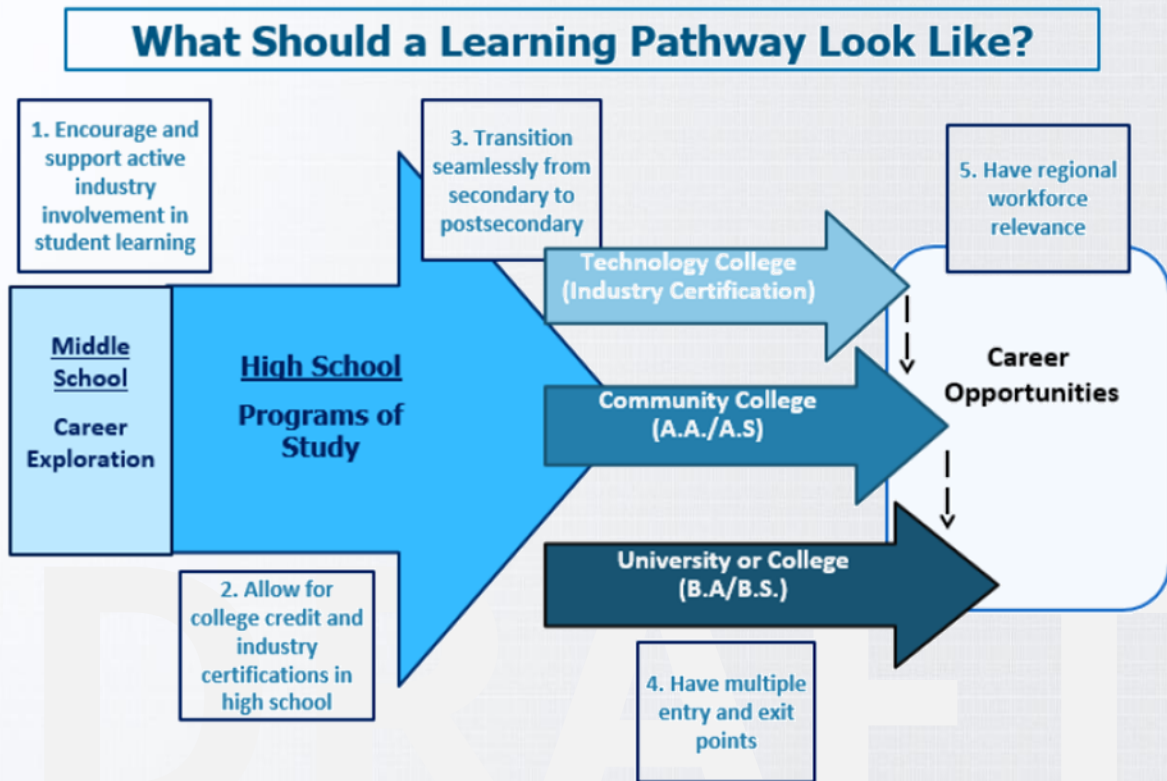
There is a strong correlation between the WIOA defined career pathways and elements, the focus of the Pathways TN initiative, and the leading agencies that are supporting the implementation of both. Pathways TN provides a seamless approach to developing regional, long term, workforce pipelines in Tennessee and has been recognized as an approach to reach both education goals as well as workforce development goals. This volunteer driven, unlegislated initiative is being implemented in multiple counties across Tennessee and has proven to be an effective coordinated effort of resources for lasting economic and workforce development growth. Pathways Tennessee leverages the CTE programs of study that reflect the 16 nationally recognized career clusters and postsecondary programs to increase credential and degree attainment for high growth, in demand jobs in Tennessee. Important programs that make Pathways Tennessee and career pathways initiatives successful in Tennessee is the incorporation of work-based learning and access to early postsecondary opportunities (dual enrollment, dual credit, AP, IT, etc.)

Focusing on the governor’s goal of Education and Workforce Development Goal, the division of Career and Technical Education at the Department of Education oversees work-based learning (WBL) in Tennessee. This proactive approach to bridging the gap between high school and high-demand, high skills careers consists of 16 nationally recognized career clusters. Each of these clusters seeks to attain the ultimate goal of preparing students for success at the postsecondary level and in their chosen careers. These clusters are organized into 16 broad categories that encompass virtually all occupations from entry through professional levels and are aligned with the U.S. Department of Education’s structure of Career and Technical Education. Each cluster is divided into different pathways that are grouped by the knowledge and skills required for occupations in these career fields.



# STATE STRATEGY

Figure 1



Focusing on the governor's goal of Education and Workforce Development Goal, the Division of College, Career and Technical Education at the Department of Education oversees work-based learning (WBL) and career pathways in Tennessee as mentioned in the above paragraph. Career pathways, specifically through the Pathways Tennessee initiative, is a proactive approach to bridging the gap between high school and high-demand, high skills careers consists of 16 nationally recognized career clusters. Each of these clusters seeks to attain the ultimate goal of preparing students for success at the postsecondary level and in their chosen careers. These clusters are organized into 16 broad categories that encompass virtually all occupations from entry through professional levels and are aligned with the U.S. Department of Education's structure of Career and Technical Education. Each cluster is divided into different pathways that are grouped by the knowledge and skills required for occupations in these career fields. The framework for Pathways Tennessee allows for local flexibility and selection of the clusters that would provide the greatest impact on a local/regional economy. The framework includes the following components:

- 1) **Encourage and support active industry involvement in student learning:** Active industry involvement begins early on in a student's learning pathway. This involvement can and should take on many different forms and should progress in involvement as the student progresses through his/her learning pathway. This type of involvement can represent (1) curricular alignment with labor market needs, (2) student career site visits/employer visits to schools, (3) industry advisory councils, (4) teacher externships and student internships, and/or (5) active work-based learning experiences and internships.

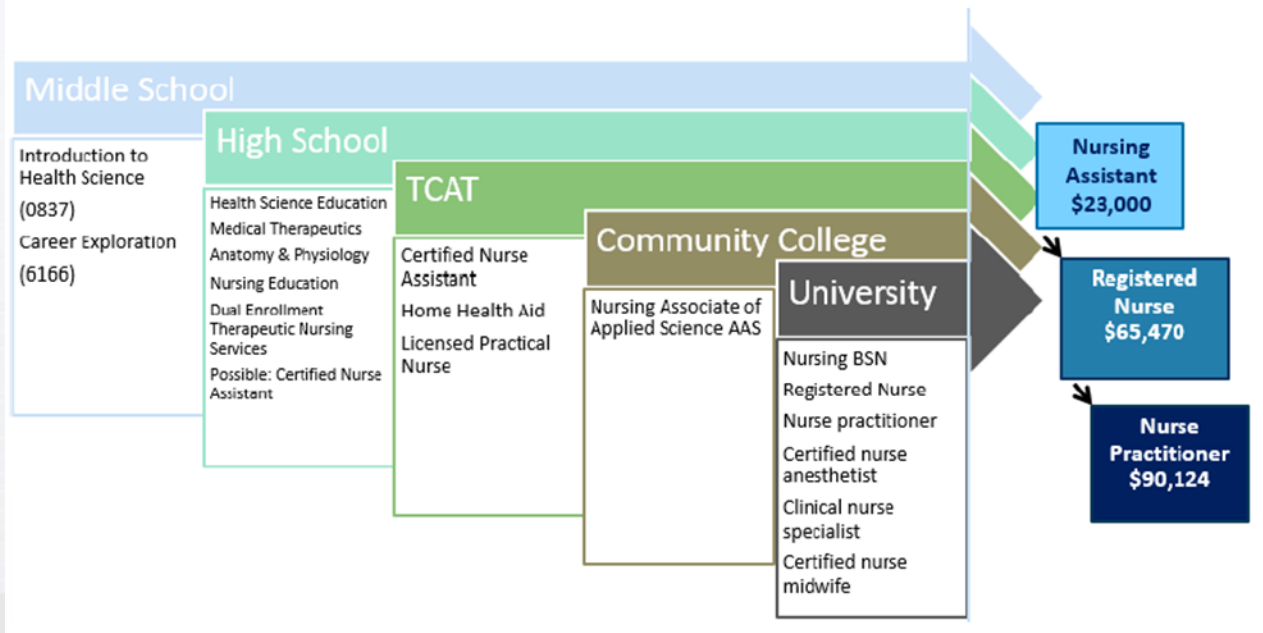


# STATE STRATEGY

2) *Allow for college credit and industry certifications in high school* Students should be demonstrating proficiency as they progress through their learning pathway. To ensure students are developing college and career ready skill sets, robust learning pathways should embed opportunities for students to demonstrate these skills through early postsecondary and industry credentials. A learning pathway and program of study should be seamless from high school through postsecondary as students build upon prior learning with stackable credentials at various levels of education. Each credential or degree a student receives will, ideally, translate to the professional continuum in his/her selected career (promotions, qualifications for higher paying positions, leadership roles, postsecondary credit, etc.). Figure 2 demonstrates this concept. This is an example from the Therapeutic Nursing Services program of study in the Health Science career cluster. The Certified Nursing Assistant certification serves as a capstone industry certification for this particular program of study. Achievement of this certification reflects attainment of required industry skills in order to be gainfully employed and/or to continue matriculation to a postsecondary degree or credential.

It is important to note that several stackable credentials can and should be included in a student’s pathway. Stackable credentials, such as the Microsoft Office Suite certifications, allow a student to demonstrate proficiency along his/her learning pathway. These stackable credentials are just as important as capstone certifications since they build a student’s confidence and demonstrate a valuable portfolio of skills.

Figure 2



# STATE STRATEGY

- 3) Transition seamlessly from secondary to postsecondary Robust, aligned learning pathways have clear goals for student entry into postsecondary. They detail the credential and/or degree a student needs to continue along a desired career path. As Figure 1 & 2 demonstrate, there must be clear, aligned pathways for students to advance from secondary to postsecondary. Middle school courses should lay the foundation for a student's chosen program of study in high school, which should in turn prepare that student for the next level of postsecondary coursework – whether this is at a TN College of Applied Technology, a two-year community college, or a four-year university. At each stage of the pathway, the student should be building upon the knowledge and skills learned in previous coursework and demonstrating ongoing academic, technical, and soft-skill mastery.
- 4) Have multiple entry and exit points Robust, aligned pathways with multiple entry and exit points prepare students for life-long growth in their chosen careers. Consider the example of the Therapeutic Nursing Services program of study in the Health Science career cluster. The student is prepared to exit the learning pathway upon high school graduation with a Certified Nursing Assistant certification and go directly into the workforce. However, the student will be equally prepared to take that achieved certification and apply it towards entrance into a Nursing Associate of Applied Science program at a community college and/or move into a nursing program at a four-year university.
- 5) Have regional workforce relevance Robust, aligned pathways must connect to legitimate opportunities for students in and around their communities. Department promoted programs of study, if implemented with fidelity, should feed directly into related postsecondary programs that are aligned to the needs of regional labor and economic and community development data. These data should reflect high skill, high wage, and high growth opportunities so that students and parents see and understand the viable opportunities for employment upon graduation from secondary and postsecondary.

Regional workforce development boards are well positioned to develop and expand regional career pathways through driving the cross-agency supported Pathways Tennessee career pathways framework.

In addition, in an effort to increase the visibility and success of WBL opportunities for students across Tennessee, the Department of Education has developed Work-Based Learning Champions. Through a partnership with TNECD and TDLWD, this initiative seeks to champion a robust talent pipeline in Tennessee through the development and promotion of work-based learning (WBL) to help motivated, mature high school students pursue lifelong careers in high-wage, high-demand Tennessee industries. Each of the industry participants compete globally for talent and eagerly seek to bridge the skills gap and address workforce demands. The roles and responsibilities/strategic priorities include the following:

# STATE STRATEGY

- Increase community awareness that WBL can address regional skills gaps and workforce demands
  - Sharing WBL messaging with key community stakeholders, leaders, and peers
- Advocates for early and frequent access to TN workplaces and promote student awareness of growing TN careers
  - Breaking down barriers that prohibit minors in the workplace
  - Champion the access to early grade exposure and career exploration to high growth Tennessee careers
  - Develop and promote a TN Youth Apprenticeship model for motivated and skilled high school students
- Define the gold standard for soft skills in the Tennessee workforce and promote the activities that foster them
  - Promote the adoption and use of soft-skill development strategies and assessments
- Drive the creation and adoption of WBL legislation that encourages hands-on WBL and protects stakeholders
  - Promote incentives and funding solutions to offset liability costs of employers who adopt the TN WBL/Youth Apprenticeship model

Additionally, the increased focused on work-based learning (WBL) in Tennessee has expanded the influence of career pathways. In an increasingly complex global economy, all students must be prepared with intellectual, technical, and social skills needed to compete and contribute meaningfully to their communities. For most, this will mean completing some postsecondary education or training; for all, it will mean learning about themselves and the world of work. WBL is a proactive approach our state has taken to bridge the gap between high school and high-demand, high-skill careers in Tennessee. Students build on classroom-based instruction to develop employability skills that prepare them for success in postsecondary education and future careers. Through experiences like internships, apprenticeships, and paid work experience, juniors and seniors (16 years or older) may earn high school credit for capstone WBL experiences. WBL Coordinators are educators who are trained and certified by the state to coordinate these WBL experiences for students. The Department of Education has redesigned its WBL policies and developed new resources to help school districts offer WBL experiences to their students. Updated policies and procedures have been implemented in the 2015-2016 school year and include but are not limited to WBL Certification Training, WBL Professional Learning Communities and plethora of WBL Coordinator Resources. The integration of industry leaders, workforce development partners, and education policy has proven to be a seamless pipeline to introduce young workers to the growing workforce.



# SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

## STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

### ***State Strategy Implementation***

**(1) State Board Functions.** *Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).*

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) serves as the administrative entity for all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds awarded to Tennessee from the U.S. Department of Labor of Labor (USDOL). The USDOL Region 3, located in Atlanta, Georgia, provides the federal oversight and technical assistance to TDLWD on all programmatic and fiscal matters.

Governor Bill Haslam's Executive Order #46 designates the reconstitution of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) in accordance with section 101 of WIOA. The SWDB has three committees, including an Executive Committee comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair, and committee chairs. The Executive Committee shall have supervision of the affairs of the Board between its business meetings, and conduct necessary business to ensure compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (P.L. 113—128) as may be amended from time to time, and applicable state and federal regulations. The Executive Committee may make recommendations to the Board, and perform such other duties as are specified in the bylaws. The Executive Committee shall be subject to the order of the Board, and none of its acts shall conflict with these bylaws or policies of the Board.

There are three standing committees of the Board, for which the Board Chair appoints a Chair. These individuals are joined by a Vice Chair, Staff Liaison and members. The committees shall convene at least four times per year in advance of the full Board meetings and as needed upon the advisement of the Board Chair.

***Oversight Committee*** - the Oversight Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Advise the Governor on program and policy changes under WIOA
- Lead the development, maintenance and modification of state, regional and local plans
- Serve as an advisor to review statewide program alignment
- Review and make recommendations on program funding allocations
- Lead review of statewide workforce system

***Operations Committee*** - the Operations Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Oversee the continuous improvement of WIOA programs and activities
- Lead monitor of state performance/accountability
- Lead coordinator of policies and provision of WIOA services
- Review and make recommendations for performance reporting, including Labor Market Information

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

**Opportunities Committee** - the Opportunities Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Identify and share workforce system best practices
- Develop strategies for technology alignment and integration
- Lead review of service model strategies in WIOA programs
- Oversee all WIOA Youth program initiatives

The Division of Workforce Services merged multiple programs and services to better align and administer required services. A State Board was appointed by the Governor according to WIOA. The State Board and Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development are responsible for guiding the establishment of a statewide, seamless one-stop delivery system, called the American Job Center system (Workforce System). These efforts remain imperative to capitalize on our economic development successes and how that aligns with workforce development and educational attainment in our state.

**(2) Implementation of State Strategy.** *Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in II(c) above. This must include a description of*

**(A) Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy.** *Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.*

The Tennessee Workforce System has integrated its services to allow all core and non-core partners to work collaboratively and seamlessly in the delivery of services available under multiple workforce service programs. The Workforce System strives for a robust implementation of business sector strategies, jobseeker universal access to career services; streamlined business services teams, linked assessments and referrals, and targeted training and placements. This is achieved by functionally aligning staff and facilities in a manner that simplifies customer service delivery, capitalizes on the strengths of staff and/or technology to deliver services, leverage resources, and reduces duplication. This is also achieved through close integration of Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, and other partners in the Tennessee American Job Centers (AJC's).

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

In accordance with the Governor's restructuring of regional staff and responsibilities, the workforce system has been realigned to allow for optimal collaborative functionality and streamlining the delivery of services. After the reorganization of the comprehensive and affiliate AJC's, the workforce system fully implemented the Jobs4TN online job database. This implementation included training over 300 Title I and Title III staff on the utilization of case management and performance metrics for their respective programs. Next, the workforce system realigned the management structure to closely resemble the job base camp structure of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD). With a regional structure that includes nine regions, each has a Regional Director who has optimal decision making authority on the Local Workforce Development Boards and the workforce system's functions in the respective area. This leadership structure helps assure the state's strategies are effectively implemented in the local areas, especially allowing for a more integrated, job driven service delivery system as well as in accordance with the structure across the state.

The restructuring of Tennessee's workforce system has simultaneously transformed employment, education, and training services delivered across the state. Universal access integrates an array of labor exchange services and allows workers, job seekers, and businesses to access these resources either on-site or through automation using technology. Each center offers automated labor market information and internet access including help for using the Jobs4TN online jobs database, on-site workshops as well as job placement, recruitment and training referral services. The workforce services reinforced functional alignment by implementing the Service Integration (Policy #7) and One-Stop Delivery System (Policy #8) policies. These policies provide operational and functional guidance on the collaborative service delivery structure at the comprehensive and affiliate AJC's, as well as partner locations.

WIOA provides an opportunity for the workforce system to align several programs to assist participants with barriers build their skills and find family-supporting jobs. As the administrator the workforce system in Tennessee, TDLWD has the following benefits:

- We are at the center of workforce development in Tennessee (approximately \$80 million in federal funds is allocated to our Department each year)
- We work to connect employers looking for qualified workers (80,000 + job orders in Jobs4TN at any given point)
- We work to connect job seekers with hiring employers (approximately 225,000 engage of services each year looking for employment and training opportunities)
- We prioritize our efforts based on demand occupations and serving people with barriers
- While we have to prioritize our efforts, we serve all companies looking for workers and support potential labor pools in connecting with job opportunities
- Job orders run the gamut from entry level with no educational priority to high skilled specific disciplines
- Job applicants range from no Hi-SET/ GED to 16 years of education and beyond



# SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

## STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

### Core Program Partners & Activities

#### CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT TENNESSEE’S STRATEGY

<b>Title I</b> <b>WIOA Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, and Youth Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide statewide educational and training activities</li> </ul>	<b>Title II</b> <b>Adult Education &amp; Family Literacy Act Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide HiSet preparation and testing services, and ELL services.</li> </ul>	<b>Title III</b> <b>Wagner-Peyser Act Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide outreach and labor exchange activities for individuals and employers</li> </ul>	<b>Title IV</b> <b>Vocational Rehabilitation Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide customized outreach and employment services through the AJC on behalf of VR clients, business and industry.</li> </ul>
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Core program activities to implement the State’s strategy includes:

1) *Partnership and Leveraging Resources*

The Governor’s Education and Workforce Development Goal: Objective I- leveraging resources, and partnerships across departments and programs to aid in developing more seamless paths from training into the workforce, along with the Governor’s Conservative Fiscal Leadership Goal and Objectives, are a key component of the development of this State Combined Plan.

2) *Leveraging Discretionary and Formula Resources*

In keeping with the Governor’s conservative Fiscal Goal, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce development has encouraged its local Workforce investment Areas to maximize resources and braid WIOA funds with other Federal and state Discretionary funds and with local entities which have a vested interest in the development of the local workforce.

3) *Expanding Opportunities to Leverage Resources*

- Partnering regionally with economic development entities and other critical stakeholders, including Pathways Tennessee, to better align education and workforce development activities and policies with regional labor markets, economic growth strategies and employer demand
- Partnering with the business community, including business associations, and educational institutions (including secondary and post-secondary institutions such as community colleges) to design and implement programs and career pathways that lead to credentials and employment
- Partnering with and leveraging resources from other federally-funded programs, such as Adult Basic Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Small Business Development Centers, etc.

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- Partnering with community-based organizations, since they are key providers of basic skills training, technical skills training, supportive services, and workforce development services in communities across Tennessee
- Sustaining summer employment and work experience opportunities - state and local workforce investment boards should consider using additional sources of funding to leverage summer employment program activities. In addition to regular WIOA Youth formula funds, local areas can use other resources, such as Job Corps, and fund matching from private industry.

#### 4) *Policy Alignment.*

The renewed focus on business services and on ensuring that job seekers and youth are positioned to meet Tennessee employer needs requires TDLWD to significantly restructure many of its policies that dated back to the beginning of WIA. The new policies will enhance the delivery system and reflect the Governor's vision of effective and efficient governance through the alignment of several programs. Such programs will include those that are responsive to various needs of customers returning to the job market or needing an upgrade of their skills to meet job market demands.

Within the American Jobs Centers in Tennessee, the State Workforce Development Board has adopted the functional alignment strategies outlined in this plan and supporting policies to further integrate the partner services with AJCs, to also leverage funding, reduce duplication, and provide improved quality customer service to Tennesseans.

**(B) *Alignment with Activities outside the Plan.*** Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

The activities listed in the chart above identify the required and optional activities that will be carried out by the Workforce System. In order to align the activities, the State Board approved the Service Integration Policy. This policy requires that both required and optional partners work collaboratively and seamlessly in the delivery of services available under multiple workforce service programs. The Workforce System strives for a robust implementation of business sector strategies, jobseeker universal access to labor exchange services; streamlined business services teams, linked assessments and referrals, and targeted training and placements. This is achieved through close integration of Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Adult Education, and other partners in the AJC.

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The activities listed in the chart below identify the required and optional activities that will be carried out by the Workforce System. In order to align the activities, the State Board approved the Service Integration Policy. This policy requires that both required and optional partners work collaboratively and seamlessly in the delivery of services available under multiple workforce service programs. The Workforce System strives for a robust implementation of business sector strategies, jobseeker universal access to labor exchange services; streamlined business services teams, linked assessments and referrals, and targeted training and placements. This is achieved through close integration of Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Adult Education, and other partners in the AJC.





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### CTE

Tennessee's Career & Technical Education consists of 16 nationally recognized career clusters with the ultimate goal of preparing students for success at the postsecondary level and in their chosen careers. More information detailing program specifics is outlined in [Section II\(c\)](#) and also addressed in [Section III \(E\)](#).

### SCSEP

Targets subsidized temporary employment for workers over age 55 and contract management. More information detailing program specifics is outlined in Section VII.

### SNAP EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING PROGRAM

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) is the direct grantee of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Funds. Although TDLWD is the administrative entity, the program is operated as a partnership between the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) and TDLWD. DHS makes the eligibility determination for SNAP benefits and refers Participants through an automated interface. Communication is maintained throughout each individual's participation to ensure their status is accurately tracked by both departments.

Participants are required to observe a program orientation that explain the work requirements, components offered, component requirements, and assistance provided for each component. We hope to implement an Online Orientation during Fiscal Year 2016. After the Orientation has been completed, program Participants are assessed during a one on one meeting to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP). The assessment will review the individual's background, education, work history, hobbies, and any barriers to employment. The plan can include education and/or training activities, but the overall goal is obtaining employment with a gainful wage that significantly reduces or eliminates the need for governmental assistance. After the IEP is developed, Participants will immediately begin their participation in their most suitable component.

TDLWD has a number of divisions and programs that provide a vast array of services that combine to support jobs and workforce development in Tennessee. The Workforce Services Division is responsible for delivering the Department's employment and educational services to employers and job seekers in local AJC, partner agencies, and online at [www.jobs4tn.gov](http://www.jobs4tn.gov).

SNAP E&T is fully integrated within that structure offering all training and educational opportunities to SNAP E&T participants. The AJC Workforce Services structure also allows the leverage of Non-Federal funds of Partner Programs/Agencies to create 50/50 partnerships to expand services and move more SNAP E&T participants to self-sufficiency, which we hope to explore more during Fiscal Year 2016.

The Governor of Tennessee, Bill Haslam, has challenged our state with a "Drive to 55" mission for Tennessee's future workforce and economic development. The drive is to get 55% of Tennesseans equipped with a college degree or certificate by the year 2025.

SNAP E&T will utilize the TN Reconnect initiative to assist adults with their training needs. Reconnect will cover tuition/ fees, so there is no cost to the program, other than supportive services. We plan to explore Reconnect as a potential Third Party Partnership during this Fiscal year.

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Federal Fiscal Year 2015 was a transition year for Tennessee's SNAP E&T Program. New staff was hired, an automated referral process was implemented, and reviews were completed in all TDLWD offices to identify deficiencies and address them in all offices. Training and technical visits were completed to ensure the new vision of the program was clearly relayed and understood by all staff assigned to the program. We feel a solid foundation has been established and we are ready to take full advantage of being integrated within Tennessee's workforce system and begin pursuing Third Party Partnership opportunities.

There are currently no Tribal Organizations in the state of Tennessee, so there are no specific plans for this population at this time.

### *SNAP E&T Program Changes*

The SNAP E&T Program expanded during FFY 2015 to offer services in a total of 13 of Tennessee's 95 most populated counties. The expansion allowed SNAP E&T services to be offered in a Comprehensive AJC in each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA), providing training and educational opportunities to over half of Tennessee's mandatory work registrants and created the flexibility to expand to any county within the LWDA to accommodate the needs of the ABAWD population we expect to serve in FFY 2016.

To accommodate the ABAWD population SNAP E&T will be offered as a Statewide Voluntary program for Regular E&T Participants and ABAWDs in 42 counties. These service counties for FFY 2016 allow TDLWD to offer a qualifying activities to 79% of the ABAWD population.

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development hosted a workforce summit in May of 2015. Representatives from 22 Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) and 12 Community Colleges within our FFY 2016 service area were in attendance. A SNAP E&T presentation was offered prompting several inquiries into how partnerships could be established. Short term training programs have been identified in each area. Each institution is expected to identify their sources of Non-Federal match funds. Once identified, MOU's will be established and forwarded to FNS for review. If approved, TDLWD will provide seed funds to each TCAT and Community College to cover tuition costs and hire a college case manager to identify SNAP participants, track E&T Participants compliance, inform interested students of the program requirements, update TDLWD's Virtual One Stop (VOS) computer system with each participant's status on a monthly basis, and communicate with TDLWD case managers as needed.

TDLWD is requesting FNS' authorization to allow reverse referrals, so case managers on college campuses can refer students who were denied SNAP, due to failure to meet the student criteria, back to TDHS to determine their eligibility for SNAP benefits based on the determination that they would be eligible for SNAP E&T.

To ensure all SNAP E&T Participants in the 42 service areas have access to qualifying components, Career Specialist will become mobile and travel to surrounding counties within their Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). Contact with each participant will be required on a monthly basis. College case managers will be on campus to meet with participants before or after class, also on a monthly basis.



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WIOA legislation requires recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient be given priority of service for adult career and training services. This makes SNAP E&T participants a priority to all programs offered under WIOA youth and adult/dislocated workers. SNAP E&T Participants can take full advantage of this opportunity, since we are housed within the AJC with the WIOA as a partner. We plan to refer majority of Participants to WIOA for training programs. Our partnership with TCAT's and Community Colleges will allow us to select several short term training programs to quickly train participants interested in attending school. WIOA can then move them to On-the-Job (OJT) opportunities that would not be available to Participants, outside of our partnership.

TDLWD plans to identify and partner with a Community Based Organization (CBO) in West, Middle, and East Tennessee during the 2016 FFY. CBO's could possibly provide soft skills training, assist with case management functions, and provide specialized services. TDLWD will seek to amend the plan when those Organizations have been identified as well as their Non-federal match funding and an MOU is established.

We fully expect to amend this plan as MOU's are established with Training Institutions and CBO's, as their match funds will need to be allocated. Once established we will have the capacity to expand to additional areas/counties within Tennessee.

Tennessee plans to include SNAP E&T if a combined plan is submitted under WIOA.

### *SNAP E&T Program ABAWD Population*

The expiration of the Statewide Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) time limit waiver expired on December 31, 2015. DHS has elected to track the 3 in 36 participation time limits with a fixed clock beginning January 1, 2016 and ending December 31, 2018 for all SNAP Eligible individuals identified as an ABAWD.

TDHS reports indicate 102,264 potential ABAWDs will be subject to the 3 in 36 time limit. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities completed an ABAWD waiver analysis for the state of Tennessee. Although the report identified 82-86 counties that meet the waiver criteria, TDHS has elected not to waive any areas/counties within the state. TDLWD will begin Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016 in 42 counties. TDLWD is notified when employers plan to expand within the state or are interested in operating in areas across Tennessee. Therefore, we will know when economic opportunities are available in the additional 53 counties during the 2016 FFY and will move into those areas at that time. Tennessee also has 42,990 - 15% exemptions. Therefore, we plan to provide qualifying activities to 59,274 at risk ABAWDs that will be subject to the time limit effective January 1, 2016. That represents 79% of the ABAWD population.

TDHS will request to use their 42,990 15% ABAWD Exemptions for specific populations, i.e. homelessness, and will define these categories as more data becomes available.



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### *SNAP E&T Program Components*

TDLWD will offer the following 4 Components during FFY 2016:

- Adult Education
- WIOA (Youth Services 16 -24)
- WIOA (Adults and Dislocated Workers)
- Self- Initiated Work Experience / Individual Employment Search (IES)

### *Sequencing of Components*

Participants will be advised of all component options at Orientation. Any Participant who has not attained their Diploma or a High school equivalency certificate will be required to enroll in the Adult Education component. Once they have passed the HiSET, they will be free to enroll in another component that best suits their employment goals. Other Participants may request to be placed in a different component. The request will only be approved if funds are available and if it's a qualifying component based on their participant type. If approved, the participant will be placed in the new component the first of the following month.

### **TAA**

Upon the notification of a WARN notice and/or the receipt of a Certified Trade Petition, the Rapid Response Unit and TAA Unit coordinates with WIOA partners to provide a seamless path from dislocation to gainful employment for trade-impacted workers and their employers. As detailed in Section VI (2)(b), the Rapid Response Unit acts as a first responder in efforts to engage trade affected companies and their employees to the Workforce System. This early intervention ensures workers are fully informed and able to request assistance sooner, which will ultimately lead to gainful employment much quicker.

In efforts to keep TAA affected workers engaged in AJC services across the state, the collaborative effort between the TAA program and WIOA partners is paramount in providing a continuum of career services (Basic, Individual, and Follow Up Services). These services include early assessment, labor exchange services, employment counseling, the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment or the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS), subsistence/transportation cost, and other services deemed appropriate. Through colocation and co-enrollment efforts, we work to provide the trade affected worker with the services necessary to obtain the skills and credentials that will lead to gainful employment.

The TAA program utilizes the jobs4TN system to promote a more consistent framework for maintaining and reporting data collected between the partners. This system allows for linking between all partners, provides a common ground for storage of documentation, reduces duplication of services, and fiscal integrity and reliable performance reporting. TDLWD Fiscal Division continually tracks TAA funding to ensure compliance with all program financial mandates. Program information stored within the VOS system is utilized to create the Trade Act Participant Report (TAPR) which indicates if performance goals have been obtained. Further, the TAA Data Integrity (TAADI) scorecard, which identifies areas of questionable or non-compliant data, is utilized on a quarterly basis to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and to ensure participants are being served in accordance with TAA laws.

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### *TAA Activity Alignment*

The TAA program has aligned its service delivery structure to engaging and leveraging partnership with WIOA partners and by also expanding opportunities to educate and empower trade impacted workers. The following activities are aligned to accomplish the state's strategies:

1. *Early Assessment of Trade Affected Workers.* Early assessment is a priority for TAA affected workers. It is important to determine whether the worker has the skills necessary to re-enter the workforce or is in need of further training to assist with future employment. TAA relies on the WIOA partners to assist with the assessment and recommendation of training. Training may include occupational, customized, or On-the-Job (OJT) training. These assessments are always conducted in the local AJC. Co-location of the partners prevents the workers from traveling from one location to another to obtain services. All workers recommended for training are further evaluated by merit staff in the TAA Unit against the six TAA training criteria as identified in Federal Regulations 20 CFR 617.22 to ensure eligibility.
2. *Cross-Training of All Staff.* It is imperative that these workers get needed aid to regain employment more quickly. The cross-training of partner staff, in all programs, assists in better counseling of these workers concerning their needs and where services are available to meet these needs.
3. *Shared Resources.* Funding is essential to provide services to workers involved in the seamless Career Center System; and, leverage funding, when possible, can better ensure that workers receive necessary assistance. Case Management Funds, along with WIOA Partner funds enables a full assessment of trade-dislocated workers and also can ensure reemployment services for gainful employment.
4. *Experts Within the Program.* It is essential that TAA and TRA use trade experts because of their program knowledge. Such expertise continues to ensure consistency and accuracy and thus ensures higher outcomes in reemployment for program participants.
5. *Co-location of Partners.* Co-location of partners is essential for a successful program. Trade is a complicated program with four different partners operating "under one umbrella." Workers should never be expected to know all program details or even all service deliverers. With co-location, workers may obtain necessary services in one place where teamwork presents a seamless and competent organization.

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### VETS

Tennessee Veterans are a valuable part of our state's success and safety on a daily basis. Congruently, the success of our veterans is an asset in our workforce system and as a result, employment and training are always a priority for these for these respected individuals. Services provided at the AJC are focused on assisting Veterans and other eligible persons with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) in receiving quality training, if needed, and obtaining gainful employment. In accordance with the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), these individuals receive personalized coaching to help them obtain and keep jobs that promote self-sufficiency.

During the integration of WIOA and W/P, Veterans will continue to receive the established preferences (as identified in the Priority of Service section below) and will be included among the populations targeted for outreach. Tennessee has developed a coordinated intake form, Veteran Service Form, to facilitate the services to Veterans.

#### *Targeting Services to Veterans*

The primary objective of the JVSG is to develop and support activities to increase employment and job training opportunities for veterans and eligible persons. AJC staff provide job search and placement services for veterans including counseling, testing, occupational and labor market information and skill evaluations. These services assist veterans in making an educated and up-to-date decision about their training and employment needs. Veterans are introduced to local resources that offer career exploration, education and job tools to the best career decision – these services include:

- Assessment of personal marketability
- Use of skills translators to assess strengths
- Research occupations on a national, state or local level
- Research employers for job searches
- Track labor market trends
- Learn how to network in various career fields using professional associations and Career Resource links
- Research training options by occupation such as certifications, schools, programs, and licenses
- Explore credentialing options
- Find financial aid resources

Integration of the DVOP and LVER into the WIOA Service Delivery system is accomplished by utilizing in-place procedures for servicing Veterans with SBEs and combining them with the new policies and processes that will support law. Per US Dept. of Veterans Affairs, there are 501,907 Veterans in Tennessee. Those between ages 18-64 are 450,313kii.



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### *Increasing Veterans Transition Services*

Tennessee has developed a partnership with the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) and the Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) at Fort Campbell Army base to provide production line training (Mechatronics) and certification to transitioning service members, allowing veteran participants to obtain the necessary skills required by manufacturing. This pilot program has been extremely successful in the advocacy and placement of veterans within local manufacturers.

As an added benefit to employers, veterans are mentioned when describing WOTC eligible population groups. These benefits are becoming increasingly attractive to eligible applicants. Strategies for partner coordination are also in place to optimize employment outcomes for these special populations. Strategies include collaboration of services providers and coordination of resources to serve the military facilities, service members, veterans and their families, located throughout the state of Tennessee.

### *Veterans Referral Process*

One-Stop partners are included in the intake process for JVSG DVOP services. Upon entering the AJC, veterans are met by a front desk staff member, who asks several questions to help identify veterans and their needs. After identifying the veteran's purpose for visiting the AJC, staff conducts intake assessments using the Veterans Service Form (VSF) to identify any significant barriers preventing employment. Upon identifying SBEs, partner staff refers the veteran to the DVOP. Those veterans who do not have SBEs, however still require employment services and are provided services by our AJC staff, but not from a DVOP. Furthermore, when necessary, LVER staff is often consulted with by AJC staff regarding military, DD-214, and other language translation; in addition to other employment/ service related questions, as needed.

JVSG, DVOP/ LVER, integration into the One-Stop extends beyond co-location. Veterans seeking services at affiliate centers, that do not have DVOP within that facility, still receive priority of service. After staff identifies a veteran, initial needs assessment will be conducted, and a determination of services will be made at that time. Additionally, the VSF form is completed to help identify SBEs and additional barriers that may require intensive services from a DVOP. Upon identifying that the veteran has SBEs, the DVOP assigned to that county will be notified. Within 24 hours, the DVOP makes contact and schedules an appointment to meet with the veteran and proceeds with the subsequent intensive services.

Individuals entering the American Job Center are met with signage and are encouraged to identify themselves as veterans. Additionally, a front-desk American Job Center representative provides an appropriate greeting and inquires by asking, "Have you or your spouse ever served in the Military?" When a veteran is recognized, they will complete an initial intake assessment, performed by Wagner-Peyser staff, and upon determining eligibility (disabled veteran or with a SBE), he/she is immediately referred to the DVOP specialist to receive intensive services, based on the veteran's needs. All veterans will receive Veteran Priority of Service and subsequent staff-assisted services.

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**(C) Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals.** *Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B). The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.*

The Workforce System ensures that all individuals seeking employment are provided comprehensive career services as defined by the labor exchange system. Those services include assisting jobseekers in finding employment, assisting employers in filling jobs, facilitating the match between jobseekers and employers, participating in a system for labor between states, meet work test requirements of the unemployment compensation, job search and placement assistance, career counseling, and providing business service activities to employers. Job seekers are able to receive multiple services at an AJC:

- Get basic individual or group counseling. Learn how to set goals and develop a personal plan of action.
- Sign up for workshops to hear valuable information in job related topics. Workshops are conducted by workforce professionals.
- Receive an assessment, learn about their interest, aptitude, basic skills, work values, personality and more. These assessments may be self-served or staff assisted and are comprehensive and specialized exams that identify employment needs.
- Receive Career Guidance/Planning to develop an individual employment/career plan with a workforce professional to identify employment goals and appropriate combination of services to achieve the goals.
- Receive information and assistance with internship, work experience, or relocations assistance based on the assessment or individual employment plan.
- Receive training and education skills training or educational program information.
- Receive additional referral services to appropriate programs and partners to further assist with any other services such as health, welfare, and financial assistance were eligibility requirements are met.
- Connect with a case manager who will advocate, communicate, and provide resources to aid in achieving the goals established in the individual employment plan.

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### Customer Recruitment/Engagement

Individuals are engaging the system through various methods: rapid response meetings, unemployment insurance claims, walk-ins, outreach via community job fairs, social media, as well as referrals from internal and external agencies and organizations. The following identifies the basic flow through activities:

#### *Welcome & Assessment*

The welcome and verbal assessment allows AJC staff (Title I and Title III) an opportunity to pre-assess the individual and advise the individual to the most appropriate next steps. This includes but is not limited to services offered in the resource room, registration on the Jobs4TN, identification of barriers to employment, identification of a service member for priority of service, and identification of individual with a disability and in need of additional resources or services.

#### *Staff-Assisted or Self-Assisted Services*

The Workforce System provides an opportunity for both staff assisted and/or self-assisted services to individuals. After the verbal assessment, the individual is able to engage Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV self-assisted and staff-assisted services. These services include educational or training services and labor exchange services. Staff-assisted services can include group orientation or a face-to-face meeting. This allows a more in-depth explanation of services and an appraisal of the individual's goals and interest. During these more personable interactions, the staff and individual establish an action plan of next steps that best fit the individual's needs and eligibility. Additionally, individuals can attend workshops (resume reviewing/writing, interviewing skills, etc.) soft-skills training, occupational skills training/certification, etc. with the goal of gainful employment.

#### *Referral, Placement & Follow-up*

Upon determination of the individual eligibility and needs, the individual is referred to the necessary services. This can include educational and training services, vocational rehabilitation services, supportive services, and/or placement to a job, work experience, apprenticeship, etc.



## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

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**(D) Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers.** *Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.*

For businesses, the Workforce System provides, at no charge, labor market information, seminars on legislative changes, job-order service that helps companies fill vacant positions, new employee assessment and screening services, job fairs, and transition services for employees of plants that are closing, and other services. The Workforce System will build on the department's success through increased coordination, leveraged funds, seamless customer service delivery, and functional alignment of services redefined throughout this integrated plan. For example, the Regional Business Service Team located in each LWDA is a collaboration of TNECD, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and all partners of the AJC ensuring the needs of business and industry are met. Local Business Service Teams have been developed within the AJCs to work collaboratively to reduce duplication and further streamline service delivery for employers.

### *Business services function*

The AJC staff and partners involved in the business services function are responsible for building positive relationships with employers, identifying opportunities to address the human resource needs of employers, and design services and products to assist employers in meeting their needs. This is achieved through local and regional initiatives including but not limited to sector partnerships and business alliances. The goal is to become the bridge between business and job candidates by coordinating with all Workforce System partners to actively recruit and refer qualified job candidates based on the needs of business. Services associated with the business services function include but are not limited to the following: business outreach; recruitment and referral for job vacancies primarily for targeted business and industry; job candidate qualification review; provision of economic, business and workforce trends; organize specialized training programs around business and industry needs; provide information on human resource services.

To support cross-program strategies, Tennessee has engaged in a collaborative effort to redesign the state and local workforce system to provide a seamless service model that focuses on the following customer needs and expectations:

1. *Functional alignment.* Functional alignment is both an opportunity and a tool to effectively organize staff and facilities in a manner that streamlines customer service delivery, capitalizes on the strengths of staff and technology to deliver services, and thereby reduces duplication. It is not enough to co-locate partners, orient customers to partner programs, and refer customers to these programs. In order for the one-stop delivery system to succeed, services must be integrated and delivered according to customer need rather than program focus.

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2. *Business services function.* The AJC staff and partners involved in the business services function are responsible for building relationships with employers through local and regional initiatives including but not limited to sector partnerships and business alliances; and identifying opportunities to address the human resource needs of employers. The goal is to become the bridge between business and job candidates by coordinating with all AJC staff and partners to actively recruit and refer qualified job candidates based on the needs of business.
3. *Business development and job development.* For purposes of clarifying roles and responsibilities, there is a difference between business development and job development. Business development is the process of focusing on business needs and expectations in order to maximize the development of employment and training opportunities and then finding suitable and appropriate workers, while job development is the process of having a specific individual and targeting employers to hire that individual. Each funding source will continue to conduct job development within its own organizational structure and within the framework of funding source requirements. Individuals engaged in job development for targeted populations will be a part of the local business service team. This cross-functional strategy will ensure that targeted populations and the staff that work with them are engaged in conversation and planning to increase job opportunities for their respective populations. Business development will become a functionally aligned process that will be managed through local business service teams.
4. *TDLWD Business Service support.* TDLWD Workforce Services state and regional leadership will support local Business Service Teams by providing direct oversight, training and technical assistance. The collective leadership of the Division of Workforce Services will assist with outreach materials, event planning, labor market information, data collection, technical assistance and reporting. The Administrator of Workforce Services will be the primary contact to coordinate with TNECD and Job Base Camps. Each regional team will assist with these efforts to support the administrator in the cross program collaborations.
5. *Local business service team fundamentals.*
  - a. Workforce system partners, mandated in the WIOA and other appropriate partners will participate on local business service teams if they have a “job” as a service outcome.
  - b. The two primary partners will be WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker (Rapid Response funds) and Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange funding streams.
  - c. The local business service teams will have a lead or co-leads from the two primary partners.
  - d. The team will establish a memorandum of agreement on the protocols that will be followed related to meetings, communication, roles and responsibilities, tracking.
  - e. Regional and local business service teams will follow procedures and policies established by the State Administrative Entity and the State Board.
  - f. Regional and local teams will have options on how to approach service delivery and will participate in a statewide planning session to understand and formulate local service delivery recommendations.

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- g. Standardized forms, data input, and tracking will be developed to provide consistency and better analyses statewide.
  - h. Regional and local business teams will be trained on OneTouch/Zendesk and will work with the TDLWD Administrative Team of Workforce Services to facilitate working with TNECD around job expansions and new business growth.
  - i. Branding and outreach materials will be a statewide theme including the national DOL brand information.
  - j. Common definitions will be established to support all funding streams' understanding and requirements.
  - k. A performance management dashboard inclusive of State Board measures and locally selected measures will be required to help encourage measurements that drive positive behaviors in regard to employers.
  - l. Regional collaborations will be required.
  - m. Rapid response will be included in the regional and local business service team responsibilities. Rapid Response activities have been functionally aligned and provided through local workforce areas to establish a more integrated seamless approach to helping job seekers and business customers.
  - n. AJC certification requirements will include business service requirements that each local business service team must meet or exceed.
  - o. Business service teams are expected to collaborate with job seeker services to fill positions and focus training on needed skills and knowledge.
6. Regional and local business service teams. There will be two primary partners in forming a local business service team: Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange and WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Programs. Local workforce areas are required to submit local plans to TDLWD, in its role as administrative entity, for approval that is developed in consultation with local Wagner-Peyser staff and other relevant partners evidenced by a signatory agreement on the plan. The plan addressed:
- a. Which partner agencies will participate in the local business services team?
  - b. Who will lead or co-lead the team?
  - c. What are agreed upon roles and responsibilities for each team member?
  - d. A flowchart of job seeker and business customer flow for all team member funding streams.
  - e. A flowchart of the paperwork flow for all team member funding streams.
  - f. The sectors that will be focused on and justification for the selection of the sectors.
  - g. Common definitions and recommendations for local performance management dashboard key indicators.



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### *Meeting the Skills Needs of Employers*

A critical factor in meeting the skills needs of employers is an understanding of exactly what those needs are. TDLWD will work with its education and economic development partners to clearly identify and forecast employer needs aligned with the industry clusters and sectors identified in the Governor's vision. The cornerstone of the Governor's Jobs and Economic Development Goal and Objectives, TDLWD considers employers to be primary customers. The workforce system focuses on "people for jobs" and "jobs for people" that is achieved through a collaborative relationship among partners. Outreach and promotion, and providing time sensitive and effective customized screening and recruiting services, have developed strong ongoing relationships with employers. The department will:

1. Enhance relationships with employers currently served through local AJCs via Labor Exchange, Veterans Programs, the Trade Act, Reemployment Services, Unemployment Insurance, and Local Workforce Area Business Service efforts
2. Establish protocol and policy to deliver employer services through a functionally aligned approach with seamless service delivery.
3. Establish a Career Center certification process that has standards required for business services statewide
4. Continue to provide and track training to workforce system partners to build the capacity to serve employers and to better understand labor market information data and analyses
5. Establish policies and procedures to support meeting the skill needs of employers
6. Use the AJC brand to market a consistent message and image to employers and job seekers (Governor's Jobs & Economic Development Goal: Objective III)
7. Develop job opportunities for the supply side of the Workforce System by demonstrating the value and benefit of participation to employers; all of this will result in increased job postings in Jobs4TN
8. Will pursue high-demand sector-based workforce collaborative that include employer engagement
9. Continue the practice of assisting employers in recruiting skilled workers
10. Provide services requested by employers based on their individual and specific needs
11. Develop a plan to manage participation in community events and promote services available through the American Job Centers
12. Establish a balanced scorecard/performance management dashboard that provides success indicators for employer services

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- (E) Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions.** *Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).*

In addition to the focus on career and technical education, work-based learning and career pathways in the Department of Education, the Tennessee Board of Regents system provides a variance of training and certifications through the 27 Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) and 13 Community Colleges. Each of these institutions works closely with the State and local workforce development boards to develop training and support for emerging workforce demographics across the state. The expansion of programs of study that bring together a sequence of career-focused courses that start in high school and extend through college have grown in their availability and connectivity to emerging occupations. In addition, the collaboration in recruiting industries, re-training displaced workers, assisting with plant closings, and introducing youth to post-secondary career options/programs the entities work closely with clients to assist in meeting the states workforce needs. Such coordination of services and training is done through meetings, serving on boards, and organizing job fair events to maintain a constant communication and pipeline to serve our clients and better meet the needs of industry.

Likewise, programs such as Pathways TN allow for multiple pathways to high skill/high wage employment beginning as early as high school. The variety of pathways allows high school students the chance to earn credits for both high school and college through programs of study providing an easy transfer of "dual credits" between high school and post-secondary institutions. These previously earned credits contribute to the improved articulation between the state's two-year colleges and also between two-year and four-year institutions concerning credits earned in one institution being applicable (and transferrable) to another.

- (F) Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers.** *Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.*

The State is constantly working on strategies that will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce system. In some areas the local boards have created skills panels that will work to analyze skill gaps for each industrial cluster and identify resources for growth. Much like the local determination for eligible training providers, the local leadership for the skills panels is helpful in identifying the relevance and potential success of employer-developed curriculums to meet the employers' needs.

Tennessee's Community and Technical Colleges play an integral role in the economic growth of our state. From providing short-term training programs to customized, long-term initiatives, the 40 colleges have developed innovative strategies to meet the workforce training needs of local, regional and state employers.

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The colleges work closely with the following Tennessee departments:

- Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development
- Tennessee Economic & Community Development
- Tennessee Small Business Development Center
- Tennessee Department of Tourist Development
- Tennessee Department of Education

Collectively, Tennessee's Colleges, with its partners, are able to offer workforce development programs, provide training for industries and small businesses. Through continued collaboration, the educational partners can meet with the State departments for a fast track to meeting the training needs. Additionally, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and CTE services are beneficial for reaching and serving participants with significant barriers to education, training and employment.

**(G) Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access.** *Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).*

The state will utilize the workforce development system partnerships as described above to ensure all resources are leveraged for education participants in attaining their educational goals. All workforce programs will utilize WIOA, TAA, Vocational Rehabilitation, Pell Grants, public and private grants, and other resources to assist participants in achieving their education and employment goals. Additionally, the state's Drive to 55 initiative offers strong support for increasing educational access through TN Promise, TN Reconnect and LEAP grants.

**(H) Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials.** *Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.*

The Department of Education has an industry certification policy for high school students that promotes certifications, vetted by Tennessee industries, that a student would be able to attain after the completion of a program of study within one of the 16 career clusters. The approach taken to align industry certification is designed to ensure students are presented with viable seamless learning pathways. This designed approach contains three main goals: 1) increase student attainment of department-promoted industry certifications, 2) increase student transference of department-promoted industry certifications to meaningful postsecondary and workforce opportunities following high school graduation, and 3) provide and ensure consistency in the promotion of all department-promoted industry certifications with various stakeholders.



## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- 1) Increase student attainment of department-promoted industry certifications
  - a. Increase number of students sitting for promoted certification exams
  - b. Increase pass-rates for said exams
- 2) Increase transference of department-promoted industry certifications to meaningful opportunities for students following high school graduation
  - a. Increase number of credit and/or hours awarded upon entering a postsecondary program
  - b. Increase employment rates and workforce matriculation
- 3) Ensure consistency in the promotion of department-promoted industry certifications with various stakeholders, including students, caregivers, school personnel, and postsecondary and industry partners. Promotion may include:
  - a. Capstone experiences in CTE programs of study
  - b. Recognition for “state distinction” upon graduation
  - c. Opportunities available through the attainment of a certification

It is important that department-promoted certifications meet a set of criteria designed to ensure students can transfer attained certifications to postsecondary matriculation and workforce employment. Certifications should further a student’s pathway not hinder it. In so keeping, the department used the following criteria to determine which industry certifications to promote:

- 1) Industry recognized and valued
- 2) Aligned to CTE course and/or program of study
- 3) Transference to postsecondary
- 4) Transference to high quality employment

### *Industry Recognized and Valued*

For any certification to be promoted, it is essential that the certification is recognized and valued by the targeted industry. The industry certifications promoted by the department have been vetted by respective career cluster advisory councils (composed of Tennessee industry representatives). If an identified certification was recognized but not valued, it was not included in the final department-promoted list. All promoted certifications must show both.

### *Aligned to CTE Course and/or Program of Study*

Department-promoted industry certifications should be representative of the learning a student has mastered through the successful completion of an aligned CTE course and/or program of study. It is important that this alignment exists and that the content in the certification is not simply representative of a few standards within a course.

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Industry certifications can be stackable credentials such as Microsoft Office Suite certifications (as identified with the Office Management program of study), or they can be capstone, meaning they represent the culmination of acquired skills through the completion of a particular program of study. TDLWD will continue to work to improve access to postsecondary credentials by focusing on high school diploma or equivalency attainment. This will be accomplished by ensuring participants who lack a high school diploma are referred to Adult Basic Education (ABE) for services. This will enable many participants to be introduced or reconnected to the education system and improve their access to postsecondary credentials. Additionally, Tennessee will utilize a demand-driven system to identify which training programs lead to credentials that are essential to business' needs. This includes providing interested employers with information about the Apprenticeship Assistance Training Grant to help with the Registered Apprenticeship certifications across the state. Each of these activities will improve access to postsecondary credentials in the state.

- (I) Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies.** *Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.*

The strategic realignment of the workforce development regional directors in accord with the TNECD Job Base Camps creates a seamless connection of economic and workforce development activities. In addition, the partnership through Workforce 360 encourages alignment and coordination of recruitment, training and placement of qualified candidates. The talent recruitment process continues with pre-screening, assessment and testing, interviewing, and pre-hire training. The Tennessee American Job Centers provide assistance with the following services:

# SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

## STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION



Each department has defined and relevant roles in stimulating growth across the state, however, it is the transformed partnerships that TDLWD and TNECD have found renewed success. The Governor’s Workforce Subcabinet, the State Workforce Development Board, Pathways TN and several other aforementioned committees and initiative coordinate labor and economic development entities, strategies and activities on both the state and local level. Additional economic development activities and services include the following:



# SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

## STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

### ***Business Enterprise Resource Office***

Under the auspice of TNECD, the Business Enterprise Resource Office (BERO) serves as a voice for and advocate of economic inclusion for Tennessee's disadvantaged businesses (DBE). The office is tasked to analyze, disseminate and promote best practices and access to capital for DBEs to service providers. It also reports on the status of DBEs across the state. For the purposes of BERO, DBE refers to businesses owned by women, minorities, veterans and persons with disabilities; as well as businesses operating in remote or rural areas of the state.

With the launch of a new website in 2015, BERO now has a platform for updated and website allows for easy access for BERO's target audience with policy and procurement information for DBEs and small businesses; topics for youth entrepreneurship; as information on grants; and general resources for service providers.

One of the featured sections of the new website is "Topics for Economic Inclusion", which highlights various policy and procurement information for DBEs such as:

- Entrepreneurs with Disabilities: Programs and Resources
- Minority Business Enterprises, Women Business Enterprises, Veteran Business Enterprises: Policy and Procurement
- Rural Businesses: Policy and Financing
- Youth Entrepreneurship: Programs and Opportunities

Additional resource links provide information about state and federal resources, grant opportunities and services providers (businesses and communities). The two following resources are

#### *1. Tennessee Smart Start Guide*

The TN Smart Start Guide, a startup and small business guide, is published and distributed along with a paired postcard in both digital and hard copy formats. The guide gives an overview v on a broad base of relevant topics from legal structure to financing to procurement.

The guide is distributed through TNECD's nine regions and its resource partners and stakeholders including, but not limited to, elected officials, chambers of commerce, development districts, state agencies (such as the Office of the Small Business Advocate, Revenue, Secretary of State, Human Services and Labor and Workforce Development), UT-CIS, TN Small Business Development Centers, the US Small Business Administration, USDA Rural Development, SCORE, AEO, the Federal Reserve Banks of Atlanta and St. Louis, business incubators and accelerators, among many others. Averaging 1,700 page views per week, the guide has been recognized nationally as a best practice resource.

#### *2. How to Start a Business*

This portion of the website provides a simplified step-by-step guide to registering a business in Tennessee and is part of a larger push to make registering a business in the state easier. A general checklist for business registration includes the following steps, which include 1) choosing a name, 2) determining a legal structure, 3) taxes, 4) hiring employees, 5) licensure requirements, 6) key resources, and 7) links to the TN Smart Start Guide and the PDF of the flowchart.

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

### ***Main Street: Business Promotion and Technical Assistance***

The Tennessee Main Street Program serves as a statewide resource for communities seeking to revitalize and manage their traditional downtowns. In partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center, this program serves the 28 designated Main Street Communities across Tennessee. In 2014, these 28 communities reported reinvestment statistics that included 1,565 net new jobs, 171 net new businesses and a combined public/private investment of \$95.5 million within their program districts.

Additional TNECD Affiliated Programs are as follows:

### ***Regional Entrepreneurial Accelerators***

The state's Launch TN accelerator program is designed to assist promising entrepreneurs with the resources necessary to propel their companies along the spectrum of business growth and job creation. Accelerators are located across the state with the goal for them to become foundational components in each region's economic development strategy while creating a network of partnerships and mentors within the local business community, the statewide investor base, higher education, non-profits and government. The grant funding is a combination of state and federal dollars and contingent upon each accelerator providing local matching support. Regional accelerators have hosted over 475 entrepreneurial events, engaged over 400 mentors and accelerated over 122 companies statewide.

### ***Tennessee Rural Opportunity Fund, Small Business Jobs Opportunity Fund and Energy Efficiency Loan Programs***

The Tennessee Rural Opportunity Fund (ROF), a rural economic development fund, was launched in 2008; and in 2010 the Small Business Jobs Opportunity Fund (SBJOF) was launched. The funds were created through a partnership between the State of Tennessee, the Tennessee Bankers Association and Pathway Lending, a not-for-profit community development financial institution, also referred to as a CDFI. ROF provides loans and technical assistance to small, disadvantaged and early-stage businesses in rural Tennessee and the SBJOF provides loans of up to \$2.5 million to small businesses statewide. The Tennessee General Assembly approved a \$1.25 million appropriation directed through TNECD for the \$10 million ROF and \$10 million for the \$25 million SBJOF.

# SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

## STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

### *State Operating Systems*

(b) **State Operating Systems and Policies.** *The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section II Strategic Elements. This includes—*

- (1) *The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State's strategies. This must include a description of—*
  - (A) *State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.).*

One of the main objectives of Tennessee's workforce system is to connect workforce development with job creation and growth, and a major tool intended to achieve and maintain these relationships is our data and case management system. For this reason TDLWD launched Jobs4TN in December 2014. Developed by Geographic Solutions, Inc., this system is user-friendly and extremely helpful for the general public and our staff. The major functionalities of Jobs4TN are as follows:

- Self Service for Job Seekers
- Self Service for Employers
- Labor Market Information
- Mediated Labor Exchange
- Case Management through Virtual One-Stop System (VOS)
- Reemployment Exchange (REX)
- Performance Reporting and Flexible Ad Hoc Reports
- Individual Fund Tracking

These functions provide integrated and secure, web-based applications hosted by Geographic Solutions, Inc. They are also password protected and have role-based security for local and state level staff. They provide, in addition, full, statewide metrics and streamlined participant data as well as performance reports just for the unique local areas and all AJCs.

In addition to the multi-level functionality of Jobs4TN, Workforce One-Touch streamlines the agility and connectivity of business management and customer service ticketing systems utilized by TDLWD. This system exists with the following goal, strategy and objectives in mind:

- *Goal:* collect real time customer data upon which evidence-based TDLWD policies can be structured and continuously improved while measuring customer performance and accountability.
- *Strategy:* develop multi-agency collaboration and accountability for the effective delivery of services reflective of state workforce and education customer service outcomes.
- *Objective:* increase customer services data sharing across state agencies through an agreed-to standardized process that includes the creation of standardized customer profiles and ticket forms.



## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

Workforce One-touch has revolutionized the workforce system communication and management resulting in transformational results across the state. Below are some highlights of the systems success:

- 94% one-touch resolution – out of 315,400 tickets received in 2015, 94% have been resolved in one response.
- 93% chose self-service – the online helpdesk saw 740,458 visitors in 2015, creating 38,000 chats for instant answers, and 16,000 request tickets while the remaining 93% of users found what they needed without contacting TDLWD for assistance.
- 79% customer satisfaction – for the past year, the customer satisfaction rating fluctuates from 75% to 85% as customers rate their interaction with our team.

A major feature within Workforce One-Touch is Zendesk, a multi-channel customer service tool that streamlines communications throughout the department. This system allows TDLWD to store all support questions and requests in one place for staff assistance and reference. Within assigned groups or divisions in the system, staff can quickly respond to businesses and customer requests for assistance or easily assign the request to the appropriate staff member. The ease in sharing such requests allows the department to respond quicker, better customer service. It also provides a record of progress for various communications to increase collaboration and streamline all responses. Lastly, this system provides customer service and satisfaction metrics that will improve workflow improvements and increase efficiencies across the board.

In addition to coordinated request responses, Zendesk also includes a live-chat feature, Zopim Chat. Advantages of this feature include:

- Proactive engagement – initiate a chat with a customer who may need help
- Customer convenience – chat is a fast way to provide customer service in real time
- Agent productivity – reach more customers by easily managing multiple chats

Zopim Chat also offers helpful features including:

- Triggers that automatically send out a chat or message to visitors on specific pages of the department's website.
- Agent-to-agent chat for team collaboration in real time
- Automatic translations of chat conversations
- Shortcuts that speed up chat conversations
- The ability to route chats to specialists

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

*(B) Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers.*

### **State Policies**

- (2) *The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, describe the State's process for developing guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system, including benchmarks, and its guidance to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and local one-stop partners in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure in accordance with sec. 121(h)(1)(B). Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, the State must also include such guidelines.*

The system design of American Job Centers across Tennessee rests upon the principles of leveraging resources and coordinating services through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and/or Resource Sharing Agreements (RSAs). Through these agreements, multiple partners leverage resources which support the infrastructure and programmatic functions in the AJCs. Such partners include WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education, Food Stamps (Employment and Training), Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment, Trade Act, Veterans, Vocational Rehabilitation, Human Services (including TANF), Job Corps, and Title V Senior Services. Pursuant to WIOA section 121(h)(1)(B), the State's policy on the One Stop Delivery System (Policy #...) provides guidance on MOUs and the RSAs to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners in local areas in determining equitable and stable methods of funding the cost of infrastructure of one-stop center in such areas.

#### Policies

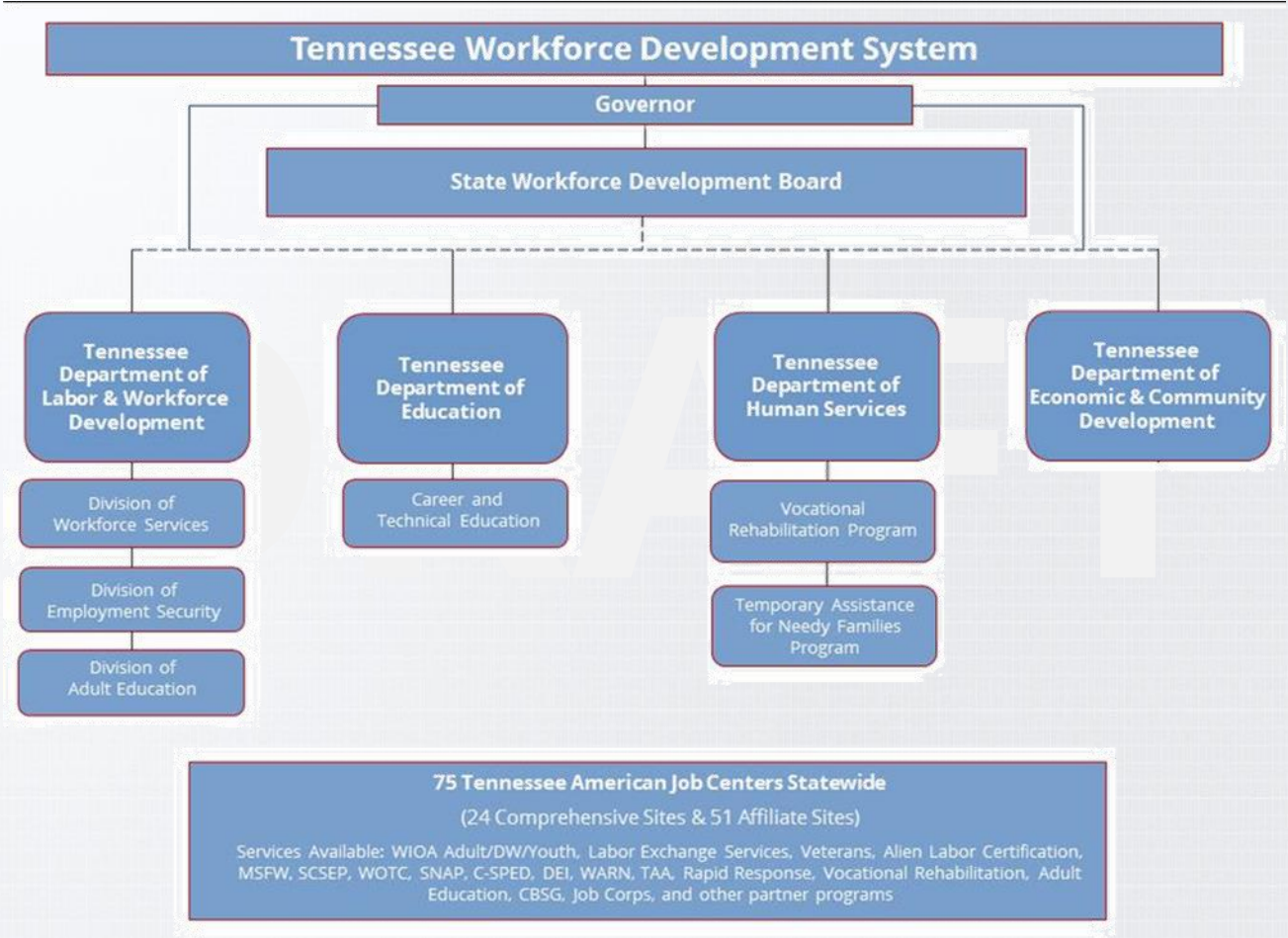
- 4 mentioned in notes

# SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

## STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

### State Program and State Board Overview

- (A) **State Agency Organization.** Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.



- (B) **State Board.** Provide a description of the State Board, including-
- Membership Roster.** Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.
  - Board Activities.** Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.



## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

The State Workforce Development Board (State Board) consists of 24 members representing various state agencies, state, local, and city government, public and private sector business and the general public. Those members are as follows:

Member	Organizational Affiliation
Governor Bill Haslam	Tennessee Governor
Bob Ravener	Dollar General Corporation, Board Chair
Burns Phillips	Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Randy Boyd	Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development
Raquel Hatter	Tennessee Department of Human Services
Candice McQueen	Tennessee Department of Education
Rogers Anderson	Williamson County Government, Mayor
Martha Axford	ABC Design, LLC
Jason Bates	Toyota Engineering & Manufacturing North America, Bodine Aluminum
Timothy Burchfield	Chick-fil-A of Johnson City
Trudy Carson	Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority
Ann Hatcher	HCA
Andre Fowlkes	Start Co.
Warren Logan	Urban League of Greater Chattanooga
Susan Lynn	Tennessee State Representative
Chris Mason	City of Harriman, Mayor
Mark Norris	Tennessee State Senator
Greg Persinger	Yates Services, LLC
Stuart Price	Lee Company
Yolanda Shields	Let's Go Innovate, LLC
Kevin Vaughn	Fire Pro Fire Protection
James Williamson	Aztec Pest Control, LLC
Sandra Woods	Retiree Member Club
Mayra Zimmer	AIG Financial Network

The standard State Board meetings include the following items:

- Committee report outs
- Updates on WIOA Requirements
- Guest Speakers from workforce system core and partner programs
- Performance and funding allocation review

# SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

## STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

### ***Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Partners***

- (A) *Assessment of Core Programs.*** Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.
- (B) *Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs.*** Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.
- (C) *Previous Assessment Results.*** Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.
- (D)** Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

#### *Workforce Development System Certification*

Tennessee's Workforce System is in the process of developing certification requirements in accordance with WIOA. This will establish the criteria that the Local Workforce Development Boards, the Local Workforce Development areas, and the One-Stop Operators must use for certification of Tennessee's AJC.

#### *Accountability*

Taking a straightforward look at workforce development in Tennessee, leadership has recognized, and some cases confirmed, the strengths and weaknesses of a system that is primed for transformation. We still have a skills and education gap when it comes to employer job openings, and each year the system serves more than 200,000 Tennesseans with career and training services, placing over 100,000 in jobs each year.

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

*"For all the services an effective state government can provide we know that nothing takes the place of having a job."*

**// Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam, February 1, 2016**

What this means is, under WIOA, we need a workforce system certification process, as well as certification processes, developed by the Core Partners and the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) in order to review and sustain continuous improvement and high quality customer service at the Tennessee American Job Centers as part of Regional and Local operational strategies. The WIOA Partner team has carried out the following to that end:

- Created a Focused Partnership Team
- Developed an Integrated System Vision
- Developed a Focus Team Action Plan
- Developed a Combined Workforce Development Plan
- Implementing a Combined Plan
- In Support of Continuous Improvement
- Planning Evaluations
- To Use the Results to Improve the System

And the central concepts to guide the system assessments, accountability, transparency, integration, and sufficiency will be deployed system wide, as follows:

- System Self-Assessment
- Letter of Intent to Comply under WIOA
- System Certification Application
- System Application Review
- Certification Recommendation

The system shall be certified under the authority of Public Law 113-128 WIOA of 2014, as amended (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.), Section 121(g); Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) WIOA Regulations, 20 CFR 601, 651, 652 et al., Office of Management and Budget (OMB) cost principles codified in 2 CFR Part 220, CFR 225 and CFR 230; TEGL 4-15. 678.800, 678.305(d).



## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

### *Region and Local Level Accountability*

Tennessee's workforce development system, both Regional and Local, requires that programs and providers collocate, coordinate, and integrate activities and information, so that the system as a whole is cohesive and accessible for individuals and businesses alike. The ultimate goal is to increase the long-term employment outcomes for individuals seeking services, especially those with barriers to employment, and to improve services to employers, and demonstrate continuous improvement. The certification policy is the foundation to aligning programs, policies, and activities in the State's workforce system. The policy will assess the effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility in accordance with section 188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and continuous improvement of one-stop centers. It specifies minimum standards for the service menu and customer service to be met and a branding requirement that demonstrates a statewide workforce system. The certification process will demonstrate that the local workforce development boards can ensure that employment and training programs in their communities operate at the highest level of quality and consistency, and also satisfy the expectations and needs of their customers.

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# SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

## STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

- (5) Distribution of Funds for Core Programs.** Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.
- (A) For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—
- (i) Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),
  - (ii) Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),
  - (iii) Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

The State Workforce Development Board (State Board) provides oversight in development of allocation formulas and is supported by TDLWD staff that also supports the Board. Staff provides the Board with timely updated information regarding newly released federal guidance and provides feedback received from any local areas and local chief elected officials, including the Commissioner’s listening tours or comments received during any applicable public comment periods.

In accordance with WIOA section 128 and 133, the State’s established written policy, Guidance on the Equitable Distribution of WIOA Formula Funds (Workforce Services Policy # ....) provides guidance on the methods used for the development of allocation formulas for the distribution of funds for employment and training activities for adult, and youth workforce development activities, to local areas as permitted under sections 128(b)(3) and 133(b)(3). For Dislocated Worker funding formulas, the state’s policy and procedure includes the data used and weights assigned.

The following chart provides a description of the state’s methods and factors used to distribute Title I programs funds to local areas:

**Tennessee Allocation Formula for WIOA programs**

Allocation Factor	Weight Assigned in Formula	Data Source
Unemployment in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (6.5%)	33.3%	Local Area Unemployment Statistics (Annual Data)
Excess Unemployed (4%)	33.3%	Local Area unemployment Statistics
Economically Disadvantaged Adult (when determining Adult allocation)	33.3%	Census
Economically Disadvantaged Youth (when determining Youth allocation)	33.3%	Census

# SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

## STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

1. Number of unemployed persons in areas of unemployment rate of 6.5 percent and above
2. Number of unemployed in excess of 4.5 percent of the civilian labor force (in the LWDA or in area of Substantial unemployment within the LWDB, whichever is higher)
3. An adult aged 22-72 whose income, or whose family income was below the poverty or below 70 percent of the poverty lower living standard.
4. A youth aged 16-21 whose income or whose family income was below the poverty or below 70 percent of the poverty lower living standard

Dislocated Worker Allocation Formula for WIOA programs

Allocation Factor	Weight Assigned in Formula	Data Source
Unemployment Insurance Beneficiaries	35%	Unemployment Insurance data (Most Recent Year)
Unemployment in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (6.5%)	35%	U.S Dep. Of Labor, Bureau of Labor statistics and TN Labor of statistics
Plant closure and Mass Layoffs	5%	Plant Closures and mass layoffs employers report to TDLWD according to WARN (Annual)
Declining Industries	5%	Declining Industries data TN bureau of Labor statistics (Recent Data)
Long Term Unemployment Insurance Beneficiaries	20%	Unemployment Insurance data (most recent year; beneficiaries' 15 weeks or more)

1. UI beneficiaries' claimants less than 15 weeks by LWDA
2. Number of unemployed persons in areas of unemployment rate of 6.5 percent and above
3. Plant closures employers reported to TDLWD in each LWDA.
4. Number of jobs lost is determined by employment reports of employers as filed with the TDLD under the Unemployment Insurance program past 5 years.
5. UI beneficiaries' claimants less than 15 weeks by LWDA



## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

Regarding within state allocations and in accordance with WIOA section 128 and 133, the State will establish policy and procedures outlining the methodology to be used in determining the discretionary allocations of Title I formula funds should the State Board deem this necessary. The policy will be established utilizing extensive Labor Market data information. If implemented, this would not go into effect until the Program Year 2017.

If the state uses other information or chooses to omit any of the information sources set forth in WIOA when determining formula methodology used in determining within state allocations of Title I formula funds, the state assures that written rationale exists to explain the decision.

(B) For Title II:

*(i) Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.*

Using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, The Division of Adult Education (AE) plans to conduct a statewide competitive bid for the term of July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017.

AE will post a Notice of Funding Opportunity on the Tennessee Adult Education website for each designated Adult Education District. Potential eligible providers shall submit their application to be reviewed and scored by independent reviewers using the Adult Education Grant Application Score Sheet (see Adult Education Grant Application Score Sheet included herein as Appendix A).

Reviewers of the applications will note the thoroughness of the proposed plan by specific criteria as set forth in the Adult Education Grant Application Score Sheet. Each section of the application will be evaluated and scored on the basis of completeness, clarity, and merit. The minimum score to qualify for funding is 70% or 129 total points. One eligible provider for the service delivery area will be recommended for funding based on scores as evidenced by thoroughness of plan, evidence of previous program effectiveness and sound, research-based practice and evaluation.

Where multiple applications are received for a service delivery area that meet the minimum score and qualifications, the applicant having the highest score for that service delivery area will be awarded the grant. In the event that no eligible agency meets the minimum score and/or qualifications for a service delivery area or if no eligible agency applies, a new Application for Funding will be posted for other eligible agencies to submit an application.

The Division of Adult Education, based upon the recommendation of the reviewer, shall submit to the successful applicant an Intent to Fund Letter outlining special terms and the award amounts. The successful eligible provider will adhere to the Scope of Services and Assurances that will delineate approved activities and set forth the terms and conditions under which to manage the Adult Education grant for the term of July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017.

If the U.S. Department of Education requires that the Division of Adult Education hold an additional competitive bid between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, the Division will comply.

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

*(ii) Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.*

Using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, The Division of Adult Education plans to conduct a statewide competitive bid for the term of July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017.

The Division of Adult Education will post a Notice of Funding Opportunity on the Tennessee Adult Education website for each designated Adult Education District. Potential eligible providers shall submit their application to be reviewed and scored by independent reviewers using the Adult Education Grant Application Score Sheet. Each applicant will receive the same Application Instructions as set forth in the Application Completion Instructions.

### *(C) Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation*

*In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.*

In Tennessee the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is considered a Combined Program. As a combined program, Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation operates under one agency that serves all disabilities in the state and not two agencies. Therefore, there is no distribution of funds among two agencies.

## **Program Data**

### **(6) Program Data.**

*(A) Data Alignment and Integration. Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.*

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

*(i) Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.*

*(ii) Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.*

*(iii) Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.*

*(iv) Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).*

The State is aware that Section 116(i)(1) of WIOA requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. Financial systems across the state meet the requirements set forth in the Uniform Administrative Requirements (2CFR § 200.302). In recognizing the need to continuously improve upon the accounting systems and reporting capabilities from LWDA's statewide, the Workforces Services Division of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development will look to implement an electronic Grants Management System (GMS). The grants management system project will utilize Software as a Service (SaaS) delivering the relevant applications over the Internet. The application will be a full lifecycle grants management system that is web-based and configurable to the specific client needs. The integration of the grants management system will assist greatly in the following: 1) providing continuous improvement in operational efficiency; 2) providing a single system capable of supporting a full range of programs and services with limited customization required to roll-out future programs; 3) increasing visibility and providing actionable data to staff; and 4) increasing productivity and faster response time due to streamlined processes. Being tightly aligned with the Governor's fiscal priority to make state government more customer focused, efficient and effective, GMS allows for enhanced service delivery by enabling automated workflows, tracking of grant funding, expenditure reporting, procurement, and inventory/asset management.



## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

- (B) *Assessment of Participant's Post-Program Success.* Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.
- (C) *Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data.* Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)
- (D) *Privacy Safeguards.* Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

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## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

**(7) Priority of Service for Veterans.** *Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.*

### *Implementation of Priority of Service*

WIOA ensures that Priority of Service (POS) is provided to veterans and other eligible persons, defined as covered persons, who meet the requirements. When veterans first enter the workforce system, the following procedures take place for each veteran participant:

- Identified at the point of entry to programs & services
- Made aware of priority of service
- Made aware of full array of programs and services available to them
- Take precedence over non-veterans in accessing and obtaining services

Covered persons receive POS in all department-funded employment and training programs.

POS is defined as:

- The right to take precedence over non-covered persons – Depending on the type of service or resource being provided, taking precedence may mean:
  - Covered person gains access to service or resource earlier than the non-covered persons
  - Covered person receives service or resource instead of a non-covered person when resources are limited
- Priority of Service applies to every qualified job training program funded, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor
- The proposal states that those with the greatest need should receive priority of service in programs for which they are eligible.

All covered persons are to receive POS at any “point of entry”, which includes physical locations, such as AJCs, as well as websites and other virtual service delivery resources. They must also have access to adult and dislocated worker programs.

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

POS is the responsibility of each staff member within the AJC with oversight and compliance provided by the JVSG staff and/or the One-Stop Operator. Reports and on-site reviews ensure adherence to mandated legislative requirements.

JVSG staff work closely with all WIOA partners to provide the most effective services to veterans and other eligible persons possible. The spirit of assisting veterans and providing priority of service is primarily a legal requirement, but also a moral imperative and meaningful way of doing business.

### *Monitoring Priority of Service*

Priority of Service is monitored by the State Veterans Services Coordinator who examines Local Board policies and procedures, reviews reports produced through Jobs4TN, conduct on-site monitoring and checks all websites developed with funding from impacted programs or grants to insure priority of service is provided to veterans.

**(8) Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities.** *Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.*

New policies address services to all populations requiring local areas to ensure the full array of services are offered. With the receipt of the Disability Employment Initiative, the workforce system has been able to offer additional services to individual with disabilities including more disabled veterans. The policy for Program Design of Youth Services, requires the Youth Standing Committees or local boards to evaluate and map all resources to evaluate access to services for all eligible youth to ensure the hard to serve and special populations are receiving services, including homeless, foster care, and parenting youth. The policy regarding Service Integration, provides guidance to the American Job Center delivery system for the alignment of staff and services while eliminating inefficient practices. One-Stop Delivery System policy provides instruction and guidance to the American Job Center delivery system that emphasizes and supports the continued development of a seamless statewide one-stop delivery system that is demand-driven, skills-based, and accessible to all customers. This policy provides role clarification and a framework from which the Workforce System entities may work collaboratively to ensure services to all customers, eliminate duplication and leverage resources efficiently among the partners.



## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

TDLWD uses the DEI Grant in conjunction with the Work Opportunities Tax Credit (WOTC) Program and the WIOA program funds to assist two of its customers (individuals with disabilities and employers who hire them). WIOA funds are used to assist people with disabilities who may need training and/or support services. The WOTC program provides tax breaks for employers who hire individuals with disabilities who are participating in the Ticket-to-Work. The American Job Centers make use of these three funding streams to ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are met and employers who offer employment to these individuals are assisted through the WOTC Program. Also, LWDAs receiving the Disability Employment Initiative grant funds have been designated with the term Employment Network by the Social Security Administration (SSA). The Employment Network assists individuals receiving Ticket-to-Work Social Security Disability benefits to find employment. The partnership of one-stop community level representatives and an Integrated Resource Team provides communication and collaboration that result in enhanced coordination of services. Such services are training, education, employment goals, and support for jobseekers with disabilities. For example, one of Tennessee's LWDAs is beginning to generate outcome payments from the TTW for having placed individuals with disabilities in substantially gainful activities. Payments are received for those individuals who no longer receive cash disability benefits. The funds generated from this program can be used to expand Career Center services and to benefit customers.

Assisting those with disabilities to enter the labor force and increase their employment, hours of work, and earnings will involve assessing their individual capabilities including education, job skills, and work experience and then determining how those align with occupations experiencing skill gaps listed in the Occupational Analysis in the Appendix. Identifying needed support services and special work features are also essential to employment. Partnering with the Tennessee Department of Vocational Rehabilitation in accomplishing these services as well as in obtaining information on the prevalence of major types of disabilities of job seekers will be essential in improving workforce outcomes.

## SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

# STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

Tennessee was awarded a Disability Employment Initiative which gives the state an opportunity to continue promoting economic development through the education and training of Tennessee's entire workforce. The overall approach of this project will be to provide cross-agency collaboration that facilitates employment and retention of individuals with disabilities by identifying pre-employment and service needs. TDLWD plans to collaborate with DHS Vocational Rehabilitation as well as with other disability service providers to achieve the below referenced goals. The state's long-term goals for Tennesseans with disabilities are to increase: Partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation to develop a statewide referral system for persons being served by the Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services. Consulting with the Department of Human Services, Technical Assistance Program (TTAP) to determine the types of AT equipment/software needed to ensure Career Center computers are accessible for persons with disabilities. Partnerships and collaboration across systems provide effective and efficient employment or employment support services utilizing leveraged resources and funding from multiple systems. The use of self-direction in service and funding across various systems along with the use of self-directed career accounts to assist in achieving employment outcomes. Economic self-sufficiency through leveraging of all resources including tax incentives, financial education, social security work incentives, benefits planning, and other strategies to enhance profitable employment. The use of a universal design as a framework for the organization of employment policy and services in Tennessee. Customized and other flexible work options for individuals with disabilities. The assurance that the structural and technological accessibility of all Career Centers for persons with disabilities who are seeking employment services. Participation in disability awareness/sensitivity training to assist Career Center staff to understand how to provide quality employment services for this targeted population. The Disability Program Navigator provided a bridge between the Career Center staff, private and public partners, and job seekers with disabilities. The concept immediately increased the use of Career Centers by persons with disabilities. Outreach and education also increased throughout the centers. With broadened collaborative partnerships with DEI, TDLWD expects to see heightened use of the Career Centers by jobseekers with disabilities. The state will continue to replicate and improve upon the experience of the Disability Program Navigator and to anticipate additional growth and understanding through the DEI project. This helps accomplish the Governor's Conservative Fiscal Leadership Goal, Objective I- Improve job search and placement services for unemployed and underemployed workers. Additionally, it aids the Governor's Education and Workforce Development Goal, Objective III- Increase employer engagement with workforce development system: Engage employers to market and educate employers on the value of hiring diverse populations, to include but not limited to the specialized target populations, as the individual is able to utilize the services of the career center to achieve job placement.

# SECTION III: OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

## STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

**(9) Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency.** Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of limited English proficient individuals, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

Tennessee LEP Population

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Population: Change over Time	Foreign Born	U.S. Born
% change: 2000-2013	90.8%	-29.4%
% change: 1990-2000	394.4%	29.3%

According to the Migration Policy Institute, US Census Bureau statistics, in 2013, Tennessee had 162,100 LEPs, or nearly three of every 100 Tennesseans was listed as being Limited English Proficient. The individuals with Limited English Proficiency are assisted through the AJC using the language-line, a telephonic interpreter service that includes over 170 languages. This service is available during operational hours and is at no cost to the customers. Some of the Career Centers also have a bilingual staff who provide interpretation and translation services. Depending on the individual's needs, the Career Center staff will refer the individual to adult education within the Career Center to help him/her learn English as a second language (since English is a priority for Tennessee employers). This helps accomplish the Governor's Conservative Fiscal Leadership Goal, Objective I- Improve job search and placement services for unemployed and underemployed workers. Additionally, it aids the Governor's Education and Workforce Development Goal, Objective III- Increase employer engagement with workforce development system: Engage employers to market and educate employers on the value of hiring diverse populations, to include but not limited to the specialized target populations, as the individual is able to utilize the services of the career center to achieve job placement.



## SECTION IV

# COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

*Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination of the core programs and the other programs and activities covered by the Combined State Plan.*

In an effort to foster coordinated communication and collaboration for WIOA implementation, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development hosted WIOA Focus Groups meetings. These convenings allowed the state to provide its current and potential partners with an opportunity to participant in WIOA implementation planning discussions and assist with the development of policy and procedure structures. The partners that were a part of the Focus Group meetings included Tennessee Department of Education, all 13 Local Workforce Development Areas, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Tennessee Department of Human Services (Vocational Rehabilitation), Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development divisions (Unemployment Insurance Division, Workforce Services Division, and Division of Adult Education), Tennessee Board Regents (Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology and Tennessee Community Colleges), Tennessee Opportunity Programs, Inc., and State Workforce Development Board Members. There were 3 Focus Group meetings held and included the following details:

- Focus Group 1 (April 2015) – provided an informational on WIOA (State Board composition, policy implications, and development of state and local plans) as well as an opportunity to review and discuss the Quick Start Action Plans (QSAP).
- Focus Group 2 (June 2015) – allowed for breakout sessions based on QSAP topics for a deeper exploration of WIOA implantation next steps and alignment of partnerships based on resources available amongst the group.
- Focus Group 3 (July 2015) – allowed for a discussion on how WIOA implementation would impact each required and optional partner.
- Regional Asset Mapping (August 2015) – provided an opportunity for the Local Workforce Development Areas to invite various organizations and agencies to the table to map out the various labor exchange resources in their area and to collaborate on how those leveraged partnerships can maximize serving their immediate communities.

Additional joint planning and coordination of programs has taken place at quarterly State Board meetings, Governor's subcabinet meetings and various department-led committee meetings.

# SECTION V

## COMMON ASSURANCES

### ***Conflict of Interest Policy***

1. In accordance with Section 107 (h), the State established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedure to resolve such conflicts.

### ***State and Local Board Transparency***

2. In accordance with WIOA Section 101 (g) and NPRM 679.140 (b)(1) through (4), the State established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meeting of State board and local board and information regarding activities of State board and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes.

### ***Comment on the Combined State Plan by Agencies***

3. The lead Stage agencies with optima policy –making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Combined Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the population served by such programs.

### ***Involvement of local chief elected officials and local boards on State Combined Plan***

4. (a) In accordance with Section WIOA 102 (b)(2) (E)(iii)(II), the State established processes and timelines, to obtain input into the development of the Combined WIOA Plan and to give opportunity for comment by representatives of local elected officials , local workforce development boards, business, labor organizations , other primary stakeholders and the general public.

(b) In accordance with WIOA Section 103 (b)(3)(B), the State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency.

### ***Fiscal control and Accounting Procedures***

5. In accordance with WIOA Section 116 (i), the State established fiscal controls and fund accounting procedures to ensure the proper disbursement and accounting of funds paid to the State through allotments made for core programs to carry out workforce development activities.

### ***Compliance with administrative requirement in this Act and annual monitoring***

6. In accordance with WIOA Section 184 (a)(3), the State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements.

### ***Compliance with Non-Discrimination Requirements***

7. In accordance with WIOA Section 188, the State has taken the appropriate action to ben in compliance with non-discrimination, as applicable

## SECTION V

# COMMON ASSURANCES

### ***Authorized Use of Federal Funds***

8. The state assures Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program.

### ***Appropriate Share of Infrastructure Costs***

9. In accordance with Section 121(h)(2)(B), the State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State Workforce Development Board) of the costs of carrying out Section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs. Infrastructure funding support from Title II, VR, and Wagner-Peyser.

### ***One Stop certification policy in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)***

10. In Accordance with Section 107(d)(13), the state establishes a one stop certification policy that endures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one –stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1090 1990] (ADA).

### ***Referral Policy for Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment***

11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment to DVOP services, when appropriate.

### ***Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses***

12. In accordance with Section 101(e)(I)(vi) and Section (3) (16 (A) (ii), the State established a policy for the delivery of services to veteran and eligible spouses by the workforce agencies , local workforce development boards and One Stop Career Centers for all qualified training programs delivered through the state Workforce development System.



## SECTION VI

# PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

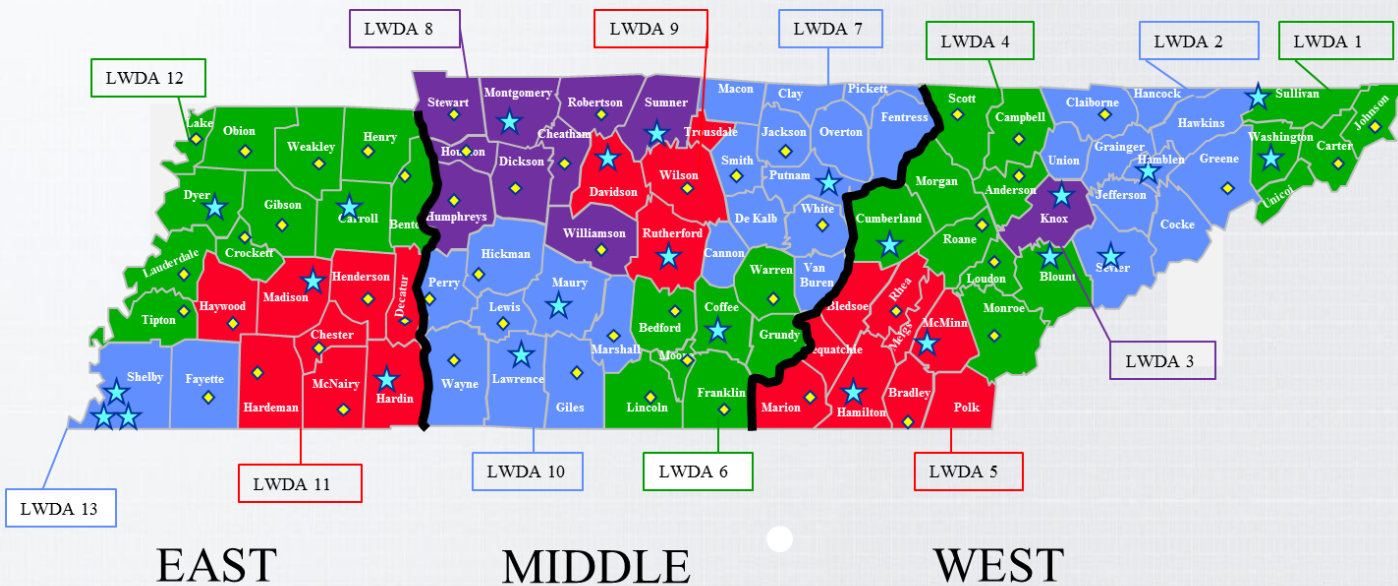
### ***Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities Under Title I-B***

#### *(a) General Requirements*

##### *(1) Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas.*

##### *(A) Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State*

Tennessee has thirteen (13) local workforce development areas and three regions – East, Middle and West. The map below depicts the designations across the state. LWDA 1-5 comprise the East Region, LWDA 6-10 comprise the Middle Region, and LWDA 11-13 comprise the West Region.



*(B) Describe the process used for designating local area, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.*

## SECTION VI

# PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

In the process of initial designation, Tennessee first explored the concept of designation as set out in the statute and the DOL/ED NPRM, also understanding its likeness to the concept of 'selection when used in connection with regional planning. And in accordance with the WIOA and related statutes, the then existing local board prepared requests for initial designation which then were sent to Governor Haslam; the requests were also brought before the State Workforce Development Board for review and recommendations. Each local board delivered a presentation to the State Workforce Board in which programmatic, administrative, and accountability strengths and weaknesses were discussed in a fully transparent environment. TDLWD considered that all issues occurring within the framework of the most recent two (2) year period, especially any audit findings or performance shortcomings and corrective actions, regardless of the magnitude, were topics for discussion. All of the requests for initial designation were approved by the State Workforce Board, and in some cases, local boards were required to provide supplementary documentation in the interest of clarity and corrective action.

TDLWD staff developed a report to provide a data-driven analysis of the economic impact and return on investment of the workforce system under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in Tennessee. This report provided the framework for the local areas and the State Workforce Development Board to review the previous performance levels across the state. Data was gathered from the Economic Impact of Workforce Investment Act Expenditures Reports Program Year 2013-2014 and the Return on Investment from Tennessee Workforce Investment Act Programs 2011-2012. All source data used in this report was provided by SPARKS Bureau of Business and Economic Research by The University of Memphis. The specific source data included the following analyses:

- Workforce Return on Investment
  - Total Expenditures and Benefit/Cost
- Regional Economic Impact
  - Total Impact of Expenditures
  - Tax Revenue Impact
  - Top Ten Industries Affected by Program Expenditures
- Enrollment by Priority Levels
  - Adult Priority Levels of Service
  - Dislocated Worker Priority Levels of Service
- Participants, Performance, and Veterans (PPV)
  - Participant Characteristics & Educational Levels
  - Job Order By Industry and Occupation
  - Veteran Characteristics and Performance Outcomes

## SECTION VI

# PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

*(C) Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas*

*(D) Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.*

Tennessee has not yet defined an official appeals process relating to the designation of local areas and determination for infrastructure funding. As more federal guidance is received regarding regionalism, the state will fully define these processes.

### *(2) Statewide Activities.*

*(A) Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.*

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act provides new opportunities for use of funds to support entrepreneurial activities among youth and the unemployed. In consulting with the State Board, TDLWD is exploring partnerships with Local Workforce Development Areas, Community Based Groups, and other entities to assist with facilitating activities to help boost access to entrepreneurial resources to youth and the unemployed. Activities will range from workshops, resource fairs, to events that will connect entrepreneurs to other resources and investments.

*(B) Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers*

The State intends to utilize set aside funding to test pay for performance contracting strategies to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of limited formula funds to improve outcomes for WIOA participants, particularly for individuals with barriers to employment. The state will offer technical assistance to local workforce areas on how to implement pay for performance with local formula funds and expects to enhance overall outcome based strategies by utilizing existing performance based contracting in combination with the new WIOA pay for performance for the achievement of high bar outcomes as outlined in Title I of the NPRM Section 683.520.



## ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

Regarding Rapid Response services, Jobs4TN is the management system used to manage WARN activities in Tennessee. The state has established 13 Local Rapid Response teams, consisting of LWDA staff and state staff, business service team staff, and the mobile units. Tennessee's mobile units better known as "Career Coaches" have computers with internet and Microsoft Office access and copy and fax machines available for use by job seekers. These units will allow full service, on-site facilitation of rapid response services.

The local teams will coordinate activities geared at connecting the employees affected by the lay-offs/closings to other employment opportunities to minimize the time needed for unemployment insurance assistance. In addition to connecting dislocated workers to employment, rapid response teams will also work to connect participants to training opportunities through WIOA and partner programs, including the higher education system. In addition to connecting participants to formal training opportunities, rapid response teams will also work with the AJCs to connect participants to apprenticeships, OJTs, and other dislocated worker re-employment activities.

Rapid Response funds will be used to assist with the expenses associated with technology features such as jobs4tn, the mobile units, materials, and staff time associated to Rapid Response Activities.

*(C) In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.*

## ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

- (D) *Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade-affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition.*

It is vital to provide early intervention to dislocated workers in Tennessee and such services are rendered through Rapid Response. The effectiveness these services is driven by the collaboration of the TAA unit and the Rapid Response at TDLWD. The services provided are paramount to creating a seamless path from dislocation to gainful employment for trade-impacted workers, especially during the first few days of the petition's filing.

Upon the receipt of a Trade Adjustment Assistance petition, the TAA Unit verifies if assistance efforts are already underway. If this is the first notification, the Rapid Response unit contacts the employer to begin the process of providing the full array of services and benefits available.

The Rapid Response process consists of the following steps:

- Schedule and conduct mass meetings once a WARN Notice or Certified Trade Petition is received.
- Provide trade affected workers with information regarding re-employment services (WP, WIOA partners), Unemployment Insurance (UI), TAA services, and Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA).

Funding is essential to provide services to dislocated workers. Leverage funding, when possible, can better ensure that workers receive the necessary assistance. Case management funds along with WIOA partner funds enables a full assessment of trade-dislocated workers and also ensures reemployment services for gainful employment. Additional funding information has been detailed in the explanation of distribution of funds for core programs.

## ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

### *(b) Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements*

- (1) *Work-Based Training Modes.* If the state is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

In an effort to support work-based training models, Tennessee utilizes the Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Program. This wide program is designed to support training that result in either skill attainment for employees or process improvement that contributes to the competitiveness and productivity of a business.

For-profit and (not-for-profit health care related only) related Tennessee businesses that have been in operation for a minimum of one year prior to the application date, employ at least five full-time employees, are current on all federal and state tax obligations, and are financially viable are eligible to apply for participation in the IWT Program. Each LWDA receives individual allotments from State set aside funds that are then used to contract with local qualifying businesses to provide Incumbent Worker Training.

During the 2015 program year Rapid Response / Layoff Aversion funds were obligated to 42 companies to train 951 Incumbent Workers. The program year ran through December 31, 2015 saving 1,648 jobs and creating 182.

Using a conservative hourly wage estimate of \$7.50 for jobs saved and created (a total of 1,830) Rapid Response funded IWT would result in a return of over \$28 million in recurring wages for local communities. Additionally, Rapid Response funded IWT would save the state's UI Trust Fund an estimated \$11,895,000 (\$250 wk x 26wks x 1830).

- (2) *Registered Apprenticeship.* Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development administer the Apprenticeship Assistance Training Grant (AATG) in support of Tennessee companies/organizations with a DOL Office of Apprenticeship Registered Apprenticeship Program or those that are interested in starting an apprenticeship program. In partnership with the 13 Local Workforce Development Areas, TDLWD administers this grant to provide strategies to significantly increase apprenticeship opportunities for job seekers and existing first & second year apprentices. The following benefits are provided to participating companies:



## ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

- OJT assistance for eligible Dislocated Workers entering a DOL Registered Apprenticeship program as a new hire, and or;
- To provide assistance in the Classroom Training of existing first or second year apprentices or for participants in a pre-apprenticeship program.

The Tennessee State Workforce Development Board authorized \$1,000,000 to develop and implement the AATG program. The program kicked-off in August 2015 and LWDAs began promoting and receiving applications at that time. To date there, have been 6 applications submitted and approved, training 225 apprentices for a total of over \$144,000. There have been numerous inquiries about the program and more applications and approvals are expected during the continuation of the grant.

*(3) Training Provider Eligibility Procedure. Provide the procedure for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).*

### *Initial ETPL Eligibility*

Initial eligibility procedures for the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) apply to all training providers, with the exception of Registered Apprenticeship. Providers must complete a detailed application and all vetting procedures under which programs become eligible. Initial eligibility is based on the following:

1. Meeting State minimum performance criteria, as approved by the State Board.
2. Training must be for occupations in industry sectors that are in-demand. Training must result in completion of an industry-recognized credential, national or state certificate, or degree, including all industry appropriate competencies, licensing and/or certification requirements. Providers must provide evidence of accreditation and/or licensure with the appropriate state or other governing entity to have their programs listed on the ETPL. Potential entities include:
  - a. Department of Education
  - b. Tennessee Higher Education Commission
  - c. Department of Safety
  - d. Board of Nursing
  - e. Division of Fire Standards
  - f. Division of Public Health Services

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- g. Board of Barbering, Cosmetology and Esthetics
- h. Postsecondary institutions eligible under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA) and offering programs leading toward an associate degree, baccalaureate degree, or certificate
- i. Programs that are registered under the National Apprenticeship Act (NAA) with the Department of Labor (DOL)

Additionally, Eligible Training Providers must provide the following for Initial Eligibility:

- Evidence that programs result in the awarding of an industry recognized credential, national or state certificate, or degree, including all industry appropriate competencies, licensing and/or certification requirements.
- Cost information, including tuition and fees.
- Information that addresses alignment of the training services with in-demand industry sectors and occupations, to the extent possible.
- Information related to the indicators of performance, which include for all students (all students are defined as every student enrolled in a WIOA-approved training program):
  - Unsubsidized Employment During the Second Quarter after Exit
  - Unsubsidized Employment During the Fourth Quarter after Exit
  - Median Earning at the Second Quarter After Exit

All providers must also meet the minimum established performance criteria, as approved by the State Board.

Apprenticeship programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act (NAA) are exempt from initial eligibility procedures. Registered Apprenticeship programs must verify the status of their program on an annual basis in order to remain on the ETPL. Providers receive initial eligibility for only one fiscal year for a particular program. After the initial eligibility expires, these initially-eligible providers are subject to the application procedures for continued eligibility.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

### *Subsequent ETPL Eligibility*

Training Providers will apply for biennial renewal for an eligibility period to span the respective following two fiscal years (July 1-June 30) by December 1st. Providers must provide the following information during reapplication:

1. Up to date provider information.
2. Up to date information on each program, including cost (tuition and fees).
3. Student data for calculation of performance information[1], which includes:
  - i. Unsubsidized Employment During the Second Quarter after Exit
  - ii. Unsubsidized Employment During the Fourth Quarter after Exit
  - iii. Median Earnings at the Second Quarter after Exit
  - iv. Credential Attainment Rate
  - v. Program Completion Rate for WIOA participants

Upon receipt of completed information and student data, the state will make a determination of continuing eligibility. The ETPL and performance/cost data for each training program will be published for the State Board, AJCs and general public consumption and the period of eligibility will last for the following two fiscal years (July 1-June 30).

- (4) Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualizes career services and training services funded by the Adult Formula program.*

TDLWD is the direct grantee of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Funds. Although the department is the administrative entity, the program is operated as a partnership between the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) and TDLWD. TDHS makes the eligibility determination for SNAP benefits and refers participants through an automated interface. Communication is maintained throughout each individual's participation to ensure their status is accurately tracked by both departments.



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Participants are required to observe a Program Orientation that explain the work requirements, components offered, component requirements, and assistance provided for each component. During fiscal year 2016, this orientation process will be automated and included online for ease of access and information tracking. After the orientation has been completed, program participants are assessed during a one-on-one meeting to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP). The assessment will review the individual's background, education, work history, hobbies, and any barriers to employment. After the IEP is developed, participants will immediately begin their participation in their most suitable component.

The vast array of TDLWD to support jobs and workforce development in the state include the integration of the SNAP E&T program and its participants. The workforce system structure also allows the leverage of non-Federal funds of partner programs and agencies to create 50/50 partnerships to expand services and move more SNAP E&T participants to self-sufficiency.

- (5) Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.*

In accordance with the WIOA statutes (WIOA Section 133(b)(4)) a local board may transfer, if such a transfer is approved by the Governor, up to and including 100 percent of the PY funds allocation between the adult and dislocated workers funding streams. As outlined in the State's Workforce Services Policy #..... local areas must provide supporting documentation indicating the required rate of expenditure/obligations and other specified criteria have been met.

**(c) Youth Program Requirements.** With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA –

- (1) Identify the state-developed criteria to be used by local board in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants*
- (2) Describe how the state will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented.*

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

In the state of Tennessee, youth activities are administered to the 95 counties through the 13 local workforce development areas. Each local area's local board provides the necessary guidance and management to their eligible youth providers to assure all fourteen program elements are delivered to youth participants and in accordance with WIOA. Through technical assistance, the state advises the local area on program design and strategy development and implementation for various youth activities. State funds will continue to be used to disseminate to the local areas for use by eligible youth training providers. This list of providers is approved and maintained by each local board during and appears on the Youth Services section of TDLWD's webpage.

Tennessee especially interested in providing support for paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education which may include 1) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; 2) internships and job shadowing and 3) on-the-job training opportunities. The Governor and TDLWD have learned that it is also imperative to initiate partnerships with private business industries and to improve educational and training attainment; and, in order to become competitive for the 21st Century, Tennessee must create a more seamless path between high school, post-secondary education or training, and the workforce. Programs such as Pathways TN, work-based learning offered through the Department of Education and TDLWD's Youth Work Experience program support the fundamentals of work experiences described in WIOA. Connected to the Governor's Jobs4TN Ten Sector Strategy, the Youth Work Experience Program focuses on providing paid work experiences within the in-demand industries for youth for a minimum of eight weeks. Youth must be provided an assessment which includes work readiness and have a documented Individual Service Strategies which connects the service needs of each youth to the service provided. This program directly aligns with several of the work-focused program elements and work experience expenditure requirement described in WIOA .

In a continued effort to address the Governor's goal for Jobs and Economic Development and Conservative Fiscal Leadership, much consideration has been given to identifying areas where resources are lacking or difficult to access.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

Local Workforce Development Areas have demonstrated unique approaches to garnering partnerships with private industries while striving to still assist youth with reaching their goals. Paid and un-paid work experiences, as well as summer employment opportunities, have allowed the workforce system to provide youth with direct connections to the workforce. Some local areas have recruited companies, to participate in the summer youth employment program, by receiving a match from the business; this match supports wages earned by youth participants. Other local workforce development areas have partnered directly with the chambers of commerce to provide youth with training in employability and professionalism. Such collaborations support the workforce system's employment goals for youth in Tennessee as well as builds sustainable business relationships with private industries across the state (Governor Jobs and Economic Development Goal: Objective I: Identify, assess, and certify skills for successful careers, Objective III, Increase employer engagement with the workforce development system & Objective V, Increase work-integrated learning). Through the alignment of required career pathways and the goals of our governor, regional workforce development boards are positioned to be effective and sustainable intermediaries for the regional Pathways Tennessee initiative.

Lastly, in alignment with the Governor's Conservative Fiscal Leadership Goal, TDLWD partners with other agencies to eliminate duplication and leverage dollars to provide more opportunities to existing job seekers and the emerging workforce. The following is a list of agencies and organizations that are currently meeting on a regular basis to address cross-agency collaboration, planning and resource sharing as well assist in making available all 14 program elements across the state.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

Youth Serving Agencies	Snapshot of Activity
<b>Governor's Subcabinet on Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Part of Core Group Team for Childhood Poverty Initiative</li></ul>
<b>Tennessee Department of Children's Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foster Care &amp; Juvenile Offender representatives attend quarterly meetings as part of Tennessee's strategic vision team.</li><li>• Part of Core Group Team</li><li>• Partner Agency in Youth Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities (Division of Special Populations)</li></ul>
<b>Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Part of the strategic vision team and provides data related to at-risk youth</li><li>• Serves on several LWDA boards and provides support for Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN) with an emphasis on teen suicide prevention</li><li>• Part of Core Group Team</li><li>• Responsible for coordinating and compiling the Resource Mapping report to analyze all state programs which provide services to youth</li><li>• Coordinates grant applications among departments</li><li>• Serves as lead for Youth Transitions Advisory Council</li><li>• Provides administrative support for the Council on Children's Mental Health, a statewide stakeholder group working to implement a more coordinated system of care for children's mental health, including services to facilitate successful transition to adulthood</li><li>• Collects data for and publishes and disseminates an annual KIDS COUNT Data Book and The State of the Child in Tennessee report that includes county-by-county data on youth unemployment and other factors that impact the workforce</li></ul>
<b>Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partner Agency in Youth Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities</li></ul>

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

Youth Serving Agencies	Snapshot of Activity
<b>Department of Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commissioner serves on the State Workforce Development Board.</li><li>• Pathways TN – Ad Hoc Committees, Core Team, State Planning Team, career pathways alignment</li><li>• TDLWD staff participates in evaluating Lottery Education After School Program grants (LEAPS) targeting dropout prevention and increase in SAT/ACT exam</li><li>• Partners with Special Education on the Tennessee Transition Leadership team</li></ul>
<b>Job Corps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Tennessee Job Corps Consortium meets quarterly. Meetings are attended by both representatives from WIOA youth and the Career Center System</li><li>• Job Corps representatives serve on a majority of LWDA Boards</li></ul>
<b>Human Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides expertise in serving youth with disabilities through its Vocational Rehabilitation Program and participates on the Tennessee Transition Leadership Team with community based organizations and the Disability Rights Tennessee</li><li>• Partner Agency in Youth Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities (Division of Rehabilitation Services)</li></ul>
<b>Youth Transitions Advisory Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Includes many of the same agencies already listed with strong ties to the foster-care system</li><li>• Meets quarterly</li><li>• Efforts are coordinated by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth</li></ul>
<b>Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It has also invited Career Center and previous Disability Navigator staff from local Career Centers to speak at town hall meetings and other outreach opportunities</li><li>• Partner Agency in Youth Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities</li></ul>
<b>Volunteer Tennessee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides oversight of AmeriCorps and service-learning programs to advance volunteerism and citizen services to solve community problems in the state</li><li>• Meets quarterly</li></ul>

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

- (3) *Provide the language contained in the state policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII)*

TDLWD has identified the following for criterion for out-of-school youth who “require additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment”:

### 1. In-School Youth and

- a. Has poor attendance patterns in an educational program during the last 12 months or;
- b. Has been expelled from school within the last 12 calendar months; or
- c. Has been suspended from school at least within the last 12 calendar months; or
- d. Has below average grades; or;
- e. Has been previously placed in out-of-home care (foster care, group home or kinship care) for more than 6 months between the ages of 14-21; or
- f. Currently incarcerated parents (s) guardian

### 2. Out-of-School Youth and

- a. Has dropped out of a post-secondary educational program during the past calendar months; or
- b. Has a poor work history, to include no work history, or has been fired from a job in the last 6 calendar months; or
- c. Has previously been placed in out-of-home care (foster care, been suspended from school at least within the last 12 calendar months; or
- d. Has below average grades; or;
- e. Has been previously placed in out-of-home care (foster care, group home or kinship care) for more than 6 months between the ages of 14-21; or
- f. Currently incarcerated parents (s) guardian



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

(4) *Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If State law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school”, indicate that is the case.*

(5) *If utilizing the portion of the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.*

### (c) Single-area State Requirements

Tennessee is not a single area state – this section does not apply.

### (d) Waiver Request (optional)

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## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

### ***TITLE I-B ASSURANCES***

**The State Plan must include assurances that:**

1. In accordance with WIOA Section 680.640 and with NPRM Section 680.640 the State established a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of career and training services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients or basic skills deficient including those with disabilities.
2. The State established a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.
3. In accordance with WIOA Section 107(b) and 20 CFR 661.325, the State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce development board members.
4. In accordance with WIOA Section 107(c)(2), the State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce development boards are certified by the governor every two years.
5. In accordance with WIOA Section 101(e) where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under and the legal requirements for membership.
6. In accordance with WIOA Section 101(d)(a) and Section 133 (b)(1), the State established written policy and procedures that outline the methods factors used in distributing funds, including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula and rapid response funds. In addition, the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the method and factors of distribution for the dislocated worker formula funds, and how the state consults with the chief elected officials in the local workforce development area throughout the state in determining the distribution.
7. In accordance with WIOA Section 181(b)(7), the State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.
8. In accordance with WIOA Section (b)(2)(A), the State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area experiences significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan.
9. VR is responsible for administering State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and these entities continue to have a good working relationship and work closely and cooperate with TDWD on all workforce development related matters.
10. In accordance with WIOA Section 101(d) (10), the State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.
11. In accordance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, the State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform guidance including Uniform Guidance including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA Section 184(a)(3).

## WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM AND AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

### **WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM (*Employment Services*)**

#### **(a) *Employment Service Professional Staff Development.***

- (1) *Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.*

In 2014, the Workforce System incorporated combined training for AJC (Title III staff) and LWDA staff (Title I staff) to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both job seekers and employers in the Jobs4TN.gov online jobs database. This joint training was followed by a champion seminar call Inside Workforce Development Summit in May 2015 that encouraged a consistency in collaboration between workforce system leaders, economic development leaders, education leaders, social service leaders, business leaders and partners for successful implementation of WIOA. After the summit, the efforts of joint training remained consistent when providing training and professional development for RESEA staff (July 2015), SNAP E&T staff (September 2015), Veteran's staff (October 2015), and training of the Business Services Team (December 2015). In tandem with mass scaled conference style training, the Workforce System encourages collaborative training in the local AJC's to educate staff (Title I, Title III, and other partner staff) on services provided as well as best practices.

The Workforce System prepare and equip one-stop center staff in an ongoing learning process with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to provide superior service to job seekers, including those with disabilities, and businesses in an integrated, regionally focused framework of service delivery. Center staff are cross-trained, as appropriate, to increase staff capacity, expertise, and efficiency. Cross-training allows staff from differing programs to understand every program and to share their expertise about the needs of specific populations so that all staff can better serve all customers. Center staff are routinely trained and are keenly aware as to how their particular function supports and contributes to the overall vision of the local board.

- (2) *Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.*

The goal is to staff the center with highly trained career counselors, skilled in advising job seekers of their options, knowledgeable about local labor market dynamics, aware of available services inside and outside the one-stop center, and skilled in developing customers' skills for employment success. As discussed throughout the plan, the Workforce System has engaged and involved core programs and partners in combined training efforts to not only to focus on a specific subject matter, but to also allow learning across programs.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM AND AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

In the context of WIOA, Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program services are a valuable one-stop resource as well, particularly given the new focus that the Wagner-Peyser Act now places on employment services for UI claimants.

RESEA offers participants reemployment services and the following benefits towards self-sufficiency:

- Orientation to help claimants access career services offered at AJCs through the resource room or virtually, with particular emphasis on accessing available labor market and career information;
- Registration with the state's job bank;
- Referrals to appropriate services offered through AJCs such as resume writing workshops, self-assessments, education and training information, interviewing techniques, networking, career exploration, and online job and occupations resources; and
- Support in the development of the claimant's tailored individual reemployment plan that must include work search activities, workshops on topics such as resume writing, job search strategies if needed, and/or approved training.

RESEA participant is provided with one-on-one services for the eligibility review and the development of an individual reemployment plan during the initial RESEA and during any subsequent RESEA. The individual reemployment plan must be developed during the initial RESEA and updated during any subsequent RESEAs and in collaboration with the claimant and tailored to their individual needs. It must contain specific steps to which the claimant agrees to adhere including reporting to and participating in the reemployment service(s) determined to be most likely to result in reemployment or referral to career related training. During the development of the individual reemployment plan, specific labor market information should be discussed, thus, ensuring that the claimant understands how labor market information can be used in an appropriate job search. All states should provide reemployment services as a component of each RESEA.

TDLWD has also implemented Workforce OneTouch, the help desk feature to provide immediate guidance to related topics including Unemployment Insurance (UI) information, Labor Laws, labor exchange services, etc. Title III staff throughout the state have been trained on the functionality of Workforce OneTouch to allow the subject matter experts to address specific questions across under the guise of TDLWD. Zendesk is a cloud-based customer service platform that provides the fastest path of communication to our internal and external customers. This is a one-stop customer service tool with streamline tools like ticket views, triggers, and automation. Zopim Chat allows for immediate, real-time interaction between the customer and the agent.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM AND AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

*(b) Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.*

Due to the changes among procedures within the Unemployment Insurance Division, TDLWD decided that the best course of action to mitigate assistance in filing a UI claim was to directly connect to an unemployment specialist via Zendesk and Zopim chat. The Workforce System provided training over 30 AJC staff to act as customer service regional agents throughout the state and train others within their regions to provide immediate assistance via Zendesk and Zopim chat.

The Workforce System will ensure those needing assistance to filing a claim can utilize the resource room facilities to file and gain meaningful assistance with their UI claim.

*(c) Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals.*

States are strongly encouraged to provide integrated Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments that combine a review of the individuals UI eligibility with reemployment service delivery at the AJC's.

Whether the state decides to use UI, Wagner-Peyser, WIOA, and/or other AJC staff to conduct RESEAs, states must ensure that the staff members assigned for each activity have the necessary training and that UI staff are involved in the development of the staff training and delivery of such training, as appropriate. States are encouraged to consider designating the same staff to provide both the required RESEA activities and some or all of the reemployment services deemed appropriate for an individual claimant, thus ensuring continuity for the claimant.

UI staff must be engaged in RESEA planning, administration, and oversight as well as all appropriate staff training on UI eligibility requirements. UI staff must be available and involved in the RESEA functions including reporting but a full time position is not required. Program staff delivering RESEAs must have sufficient training to conduct a thorough eligibility review and detect eligibility issues requiring adjudication. Further, states must have UI staff participation to ensure accurate data are provided in the RESEA required reports including the new Quarterly Narrative Progress Report (ETA 9165) for SBR project activities.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM AND AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

The Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program will continue as a major area of emphasis to serve employment, re-employment, and the training needs of unemployment compensation claimants. RESEA uses a modernized statistical model that focuses on general variables to reflect a number of economic and motivational aspects of the unemployed. The newly-expanded method of selection concentrates on those claimants most likely to exhaust benefits and recently separated veterans receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX).

RESEA clients are referred to labor exchange services to facilitate an early return to employment, resulting in a decrease in expenditures of trust-fund money. RESEA collaborates with all AJC partners to deliver supportive activities and services through a comprehensive and integrated delivery system. The claimants targeted for the services are referred for:

- initial and comprehensive assessments
- employability development plans focusing on potential barriers to employment
- training opportunities
- supportive services
- and/or job service referrals (if deemed to be job ready by the initial assessment)

The reemployment services offered to UI claimants are further enhanced through the use of Jobs4TN.gov (a comprehensive solution to job searching and labor market information).

*(d) Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate including the following:*

- (1) Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;*

Funding received for RESEA supports staffing in 23 Comprehensive and 30 Affiliate American Job Centers across the state, providing reemployment services to UI claimants identified as mandatory participants. RESEA funding also trains American Job Center staff in using technological tools such as skills transferability, ability profiler, labor market information, and initial and comprehensive assessments.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM AND AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

To improve the scope and depth of reemployment services to UI claimants, the review team evaluates these activities as part of the local office review process. In addition, review staff analyzes applications to determine compliance with work test requirements. If deficiencies are identified, the review team makes recommendations for improvement, and the local office develops a corrective action plan that is monitored by management until the desired improvement is achieved.

The Workforce System streamlined the claims process to auto create the partial WP application in the Virtual One-Stop System after the initial UI claim is submitted, allowing provisions for labor exchange services to be rendered to UI claimants.

*(2) Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;*

The Workforce System has a process in place that automatically creates a partial WP application upon the completion of a UI claimant as required by state law, T.C.A. 50-7-302(a).

*(3) Administration of the work test work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and*

Tennessee has implemented the Unemployment Insurance Accountability Act of 2012 – TCA 50-7-302(a)(4) which is known as the Work Search Plan. The work search plan (work test) mandates the following steps for selected UI claimants:

- report to RESEA orientation (as defined below) with a completed Tennessee Unemployment Compensation (TUC) Work Search Log.
- return on a weekly basis following the initial RESEA orientation for 3 weeks completing 3 or more work search logs.

Upon compliance or noncompliance of the above steps, AJC staff will update the system to reflect the mandated activity. For those who fail to demonstrate valid work search activity, claimant will be to marked noncompliant. For those claimant who provide false work search information will be disqualified for unemployment insurance benefits for a period of not less than 8 weeks. Claimants who refuse to do the work search will need to be reported to adjudication/central office staff.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM AND AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

Various methods to satisfy a work search log include the following:

- RESEA orientation including an initial assessment, eligibility review, labor market information, and complete a work search plan
- Completing the employability development plan (EDP)
- job referral to jobs posted on Jobs4tn.gov as well as training and educational programs
- on-site meeting with employer at the AJC's
- job service workshops (job search, resume' preparation, interview skills, etc.)
- following up with a training provider
- or other labor exchange services provided by AJC's

*(4) Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.*

The services offered to employers, in addition to referral of job seekers to available job openings, include assistance in development of job order requirements, matching job seeker experience with job requirements, skills and other attributes, assisting employers with special recruitment needs, arranging for Job Fairs, assisting employers analyze hard-to-fill job orders, assisting with job restructuring and helping employers deal with layoffs.

Job seekers who are Veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training as well as special employment services and assistance. In addition, the system provides specialized attention and service to individuals with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farm-workers, ex-offenders, youth, minorities and older workers.

# WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM AND AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

(e) *Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP)*

- (1) *Assessment of Need. Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.*
- (A) *An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers’ needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.*

Tennessee’s agricultural sector includes farming and related industries, as well as value-added food and fiber products, processing, and manufacturing. Tennessee’s agriculture accounts for 10.5 percent of the state’s economy and generates \$69.4 billion in output, which is an increase of \$18.2 million from the previous year. Tennessee is ranked 3rd in the United States for tobacco production, 8th for cotton production, 17th for soybean and corn production and ranked 9th for the total number of farms. During 2014, there was a decrease of farms in the state which left Tennessee’s estimated total at 67,300. Over 41 percent of Tennessee’s total land area is farmland (10,867,812 million acres), with cropland accounting for approximately 49 percent of farm land. About 238,000 Tennesseans are employed in agriculture, with 127,000 connected (full and part-time) with agricultural production. The state’s top five agricultural commodities, cattle/calves, soybeans, broilers, corn, and cotton and cottonseed, comprise about two-thirds of the farm-marketing cash receipts. Crop cash receipts totaled \$2.30 billion and soybeans lead those receipts with \$592 million. Tennessee’s top-ranking crops are soybeans, corn, wheat, cotton, tobacco, and hay. The following chart indicates Tennessee’s major intensive crop activity in 2014. Below is a graph showing the soybean production amounts for Program Year 2014. production estimates for TN soybeans, is measured in LB/acre.

Year	State	Soybeans Acres Harvested	Soybeans Acres Planted	Soybeans Production	Soybeans Yield
2014	Tennessee	1,610,000	1,640,000	74,060,000	46



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM AND AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

*(B) An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing MSFW characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFW in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farm workers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.*

Tennessee is considered a non-significant state for Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) as defined by the US Department of Labor. This means that the state is not considered to have a large MSFW population, nor any significant local offices. Tennessee has provided job service to 9 MSFW during Program Year (PY) 2014.

Though several factors contributed to limiting the number of MSFW workers, a prominent one was the increase in H2-A workers. In 2013 agricultural employers placed 261 job orders, requesting a total of 2,227 H2-A workers. In 2014, these job orders increased to 352, requesting a total of 3,084 H2-A workers. The H-2A program continues to expand in response to employers' requests. As a result of its non-significant status, there is no set trend or expectancy of MSFW participants in Tennessee that are migrants, seasonal or year-round farm worker(s). These numbers vary each year.

*(2) Outreach Activities. The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFW in the State and to locate and contact MSFW who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for: Due to Tennessee being a non-significant state, strategies to reach out to the local MSFW's are currently being defined.*

*(A) Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.*

Much like previous years, because Tennessee is considered a non-significant state, TDLWD has not received allocations for large array of MSFW-outreach resources. Thus, most of such state-outreach efforts have been implemented by the Tennessee Opportunity Programs (TOPS), 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees. However, TDLWD plans to continue assisting TOPS with outreach services. The following explains the various steps leading to an active enrollment in the TOPS:

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM AND AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

- TDLWD state staff will coordinate with local AJC offices to continue training and explanation of services offered
- TOPS case managers reach out to farm communities to identify prospective candidates.
- Once farm workers are identified, and they demonstrate a compelling interest to obtain new skills and pursue different and more productive career tracks, registration can begin and completed.
- Eligibility documents are sought – including birth certificates, selective service registration documents, drivers' licenses, work visa, etc.
- Interviews are held, eligibility is confirmed and skill needs along with ABE and other service needs are identified. Next an IEP is developed, then training & services are secured.
- Core services are cooperatively arranged and training providers as well as service providers are identified.

If additional services are needed that are beyond the scope of TOPS training and employment and supportive services, the clients are given referrals to other programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans Services, or Senior Corps Programs. TDLWD's staff plans to coordinate with TOPS directors and case managers to register MSFW with the goal of notifying MSFWs of the services provided by Tennessee's American Job Centers (AJCs). TDLWD will also coordinate with TOPS to use the mobile career coach units to bring TDLWD's services to MSFW in their home communities. TDLWD plans to join the Tennessee Migrant Network Council, a coalition established by TOPS, in efforts to provide MSFW with a more comprehensive array of resources and services. The Tennessee Monitor Advocate will collaborate with National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and others in providing services to MSFW for a cohesive continuum of services.

*(B) Providing technical assistance to outreach workers. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.*

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM AND AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

- The SWA will coordinate with local AJC Offices to continue training and explanation of services offered. These services are as follows:
  - Availability of Referrals to training: The SWA refers any interested MSFW the appropriate agency that can better serve the MSFW in the needed training.
  - Supportive services include making sure the MSFW knows their rights under the law, ensure they have access to the necessary equipment at the AJC's, explain to them the purpose of Jobs4TN.gov is and how to access and utilize the system.
  - Career Services through Jobs4TN.gov enables the participant to apply for any jobs that meets their skill set.
  - Employment opportunities: The MSFW can again utilize the jobs4tn website. Also the SWA can refer the MSFW to any agent that currently works with employers in the state.
  - Other organizations: TOPS, another Tennessee organization serving MSFWs in the state empowers migrant and seasonal farmworkers and other disadvantaged Tennesseans to achieve economic self-sufficiency by providing services that address their individual needs.
  - Farmworkers Rights: In terms of employment, MSFW participants have the same rights as any resident of Tennessee, however, acquiring those rights might be harder than normal given some barriers. Therefore posters are available at the AJCs in English and Spanish explaining those rights. Posters are also handed out at farms to the employer and employee to ensure their rights are known under the law.

*(C) Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.*

All current UI issues pertaining to worker training and core programs within the Department of Labor and Workforce Development are handled through referral in Workforce One Touch and addressed by the Division of Employment Security, which has oversight of the Unemployment Insurance program.

*(D) Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.*



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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Technical assistance is provided on an annual basis to all staff across the state about services and resources available to MSFW. Staff is also provided with annual training on how to handle complaint issues within the AJC.

- (E) Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.*

Due to the non-significant status of the state, the majority of outreach is completed by the NFJP grantees.

- (3) Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for: The current services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers haven't changed much from the years prior. Such service include: Phone services, computer services, translation services, complaint services, application services and help with jobs4tn.com*

- (A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:*

- i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;*

TDLWD will offer migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFWs) the full range of employment services, benefits and protections, including counseling, testing, job training, and referral services. MSFWs, on a proportionate basis, shall not receive fewer services than non-MSFWs. AJC staff will consider the preferences, needs, and skills of individual MSFWs and the availability of job and training opportunities.

All office staff will make job order information clear and available to MSFWs in all local offices. This information will include Job Bank information in Ajcs where it is available. Such information will be made available either by computer, hard copy, or other equally effective means. Each significant MSFW local office will provide adequate staff assistance to each MSFW to use job order information effectively. In those offices designated as significant MSFW bilingual offices, such assistance will be provided to MSFWs in Spanish and English, wherever requested or necessary, during any period of substantial MSFW activity.

- ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.*

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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*(B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups. How to better market the complaint system to farmworkers and advocacy groups are continuing to be developed.*

*(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.*

Currently, the SWA works with agents that represent the employers to train them on how to use Jobs4TN.gov. In addition, any job seeker is referred to the site with support to create a profile, navigate the website, complete job applications, create and post resumes and search for jobs that meet the job seeker's skill set.

### *(4) Other Requirements.*

*(A) Collaboration. Describe any collaborative agreements the SWA has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).*

More collaboration is needed to facilitate the appropriate access and usage of Jobs4Tn.gov for other MSFW service providers.

*(B) Review and Public Comment. In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.*

*i. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.*

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A list of the organizations wanting this information to comment on is being acquired at this time.

- (C) *Data Assessment. Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.*

After reviewing the last 4 years of performance the state has and will continue to meet the goals set. Both MSFWs and non-MSFWs have received the same quantitatively services. Although the goal has been consistently met, we are continuously improving the ways to better serve both non-MSFWs and MSFWs.

- (D) *Assessment of progress. The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.*

The State believes that all goals were reached as laid out in the previous year's AOP. The state used TOPS to outreach to farm communities to identify prospective candidates. After those MSFWs the one-stops centers would try and pursue different and productive career tracks for those MSFW's. Testing of cognitive abilities were achieved as well to place the MSFW with the best opportunity of employment. Core services were identified and training was arranged with different providers as needed. Furthermore if there were additional services needed beyond the scope of what could be offered the clients were referred to other programs such as: Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans Services, or Senior Corps Programs.

- (E) *State Monitor Advocate. The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.*



# WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM AND AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

## WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

### *Co-Location with Career Centers*

1. Wagner-Peyser Employment Services is currently co-located in all Tennessee One Stop Career Centers.

### *MSFW Career Centers*

2. Tennessee is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.11 and a staff member is located in each of the one stop centers to assist and ensure compliance.

If a State Workforce Board, department, or Agencies Administering State Laws for Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, that board department, or agency cooperates with Wagner-Peyser Services, Adult, Dislocated Worker Programs, and Youth Programs under Title I.

3. VR is responsible for administering State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and these entities continue to have a good working relationship and work closely and cooperate with TDWD on all workforce development related matters.

### *Labor Exchange Activities*

4. Tennessee merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

*(a) Aligning of Content Standards. Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).*

The Division of Adult Education is actively developing a curriculum that will be aligned to the Tennessee Academic Standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (10 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)), as well as the College and Career Readiness Standards as adopted by the United States Department of Education. To accomplish this goal, a Curriculum Advisory Team (CAT) has been formed composed of Supervisors and Instructors from the field as well as state staff. The CAT is currently undergoing rigorous training on the College and Career Readiness Standards as part of Tennessee Adult Education's participation in the United States Department of Education sponsored College and Career Readiness Standards in Action Project.

In addition, the Division of Adult Education has posted a Request for Quotes and received responses from qualified vendors to develop a curriculum based upon both Tennessee Academic Standards and College and Career Readiness Standards. Once the contract is executed, the vendor will begin developing the curriculum in cooperation with the CAT. Upon completion, the Division will be able to deliver to the field a comprehensive Adult Education curriculum, complete with lesson plans and practice material, aligned to the Tennessee Academic Standards and the College and Career Readiness Standards.

*(b) Local Activities. Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.*

Using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, The Division of Adult Education plans to conduct a statewide competitive bid for the term of July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017. The Division of Adult Education will post a Notice of Funding Opportunity on the Tennessee Adult Education website for each designated Adult Education District. Potential eligible providers shall submit their application to be reviewed and scored by independent reviewers using the Tennessee Adult Education Scoring Rubric. Applications will be evaluated and scored on the basis of thoroughness, completeness, clarity and merit.

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# ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

The Division of Adult Education, based upon the recommendation of the reviewer, shall submit to the successful applicant an Intent to Fund Letter outlining special terms and the award amounts. The successful eligible provider will adhere to the Scope of Services and Assurances that will delineate approved activities and set forth the terms and conditions under which to manage the Adult Education grant for the term of July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017.

If the U.S. Department of Education requires that the Division of Adult Education hold an additional competitive bid between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, we will comply.

All local activities will only be provided to eligible individuals. In Tennessee, eligible individuals are individuals who have attained 17 years of age (16 if emancipated); who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and who are basic skills deficient; do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or is an English language learner. Through the grants awarded for the term of July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017, the Division of Adult Education shall provide the following local activities:

1. *Adult Education (AE)* – Academic instruction and education services below postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics at a level necessary for the attainment of a Tennessee High School Equivalency Diploma. This academic instruction and education service will be targeted to meet the needs of the student based upon academic functioning level as determined by standardized testing. Services provided will be tailored to meet AE core performance indicators including, but not limited to, transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. Eligible students will have the opportunity to participate in online classes using approved Distance Education programs.
2. *Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities* – Eligible providers will develop partnerships with business, industry and the Local Workforce Investment Board to provide Adult Education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training in collaboration with an employer or employee organization designed to improve the productivity of the workforce as well as educational and career advancement for the eligible individual.
3. *English Language Acquisition Activities* – Eligible providers will develop a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners (ELL) achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking and comprehension of the English language.



## ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

4. *Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE)* - The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Programs in Tennessee will provide services to ELL's who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries that enable them to achieve proficiency necessary to function on the job, in their families and in society.

These services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition as well as instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. Job readiness training will also be included in instruction and will be facilitated by the integration of digital literacy. In addition, students will be instructed in computation and problem solving at levels of proficiency necessary to promote personal growth and to integrate effectively into their communities. Academic instruction will enhance students' abilities to obtain a High School Equivalency Diploma and pursue post-secondary education. Information and resources for job advancement and training opportunities will be made available to students.

5. *Workforce Preparation Activities* – Eligible providers will help individuals acquire a combination of basic academic skills and employability skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training or employment.
6. *Integrated Education and Training* – Academic instruction and education services below postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics at a level necessary for the attainment of a Tennessee High School Equivalency Diploma. This academic instruction and education service will be targeted to meet the needs of the student based upon academic functioning level as determined by standardized testing. Services provided will be tailored to meet AE core performance indicators including, but not limited to, transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. Eligible students will have the opportunity to participate in online classes using approved Distance Education programs. This academic instruction may be provided concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities as described above, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

*Special Rule.* The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Adult Education, in awarding any grant or contract under this section will not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Adult Education may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

- (c) *Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals.* Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

The Tennessee Division of Adult Education, through its eligible providers, provides Adult Education and Literacy activities in corrections facilities and to other institutionalized individuals under the base grant. Each eligible provider, using the funds available to them under their base grant and within the bounds described within Section 222(a)(1) of WIOA, are encouraged to build relationships with their local correctional institutions to provide Adult Education services. These services may include:

1. *Adult Education (AE)* – Academic instruction and education services below postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics at a level necessary for the attainment of a Tennessee High School Equivalency Diploma. This academic instruction and education service will be targeted to meet the needs of the student based upon academic functioning level as determined by standardized testing. Services provided will be tailored to meet AE core performance indicators including, but not limited to, transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. Eligible students will have the opportunity to participate in online classes using approved Distance Education programs.
2. *Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities* – Eligible providers will develop partnerships with business, industry and the Local Workforce Investment Board to provide Adult Education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training in collaboration with an employer or employee organization designed to improve the productivity of the workforce as well as educational and career advancement for the eligible individual.

## ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

3. *English Language Acquisition Activities* – Eligible providers will develop a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners (ELL) achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking and comprehension of the English language.
4. *Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE)* - The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Programs in Tennessee will provide services to ELL's who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries that enable them to achieve proficiency necessary to function on the job, in their families and in society.

These services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition as well as instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. Job readiness training will also be included in instruction and will be facilitated by the integration of digital literacy. In addition, students will be instructed in computation and problem solving at levels of proficiency necessary to promote personal growth and to integrate effectively into their communities. Academic instruction will enhance students' abilities to obtain a High School Equivalency Diploma and pursue post-secondary education. Information and resources for job advancement and training opportunities will be made available to students.

5. *Workforce Preparation Activities* – Eligible providers will help individuals acquire a combination of basic academic skills and employability skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training or employment.
6. *Integrated Education and Training* - Academic instruction and education services below postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics at a level necessary for the attainment of a Tennessee High School Equivalency Diploma. This academic instruction and education service will be targeted to meet the needs of the student based upon academic functioning level as determined by standardized testing. Services provided will be tailored to meet AE core performance indicators including, but not limited to, transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. Eligible students will have the opportunity to participate in online classes using approved Distance Education programs. This academic instruction may be provided concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities as described above, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
7. *Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism* – Eligible providers may provide transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services focusing on workforce preparation and employability skills with the goal of reducing recidivism. Eligible providers are encouraged to deliver this service in conjunction and cooperation with local employers.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

Funding for these activities shall be in accordance with Section 222(a)(1) of WIOA. Eligible providers are required to give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional facility or institution within five (5) years of participation in the program.

*(d) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program. Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.*

Eligible providers may, in their application, request funding for an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program. This request should be made in narrative form accompanied by a detailed description of how the eligible provider will deliver Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs will prepare adult English Language Learners (ELLs) to become functional in the four language skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking, so they might gain the proficiency necessary to function on the job, in their families and in their communities.

Programs will assess the students' educational functioning level using standardized testing instruments approved by the National Reporting System, specifically the CASAS Assessment. Assessment results will be used to identify and address learning deficiencies to assure that ELLs are able to achieve their goals. The student will then be enrolled in a course of instruction designed to meet their language acquisition and academic needs as identified through their initial CASAS Assessment results. Post-Assessments will be administered in accordance with the approved Tennessee Adult Education Assessment Policy in order to measure educational functioning level gains. All instruction for language acquisition or academic skills will incorporate Civics Education to instruct the student in the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship as well as skills necessary to function on the job, in their families and in their communities.

Programs may also provide Integrated Education and Training activities. The course of academic instruction for ELLs may be provided concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities as described above and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

## ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

Programs will implement job readiness training, which includes job acquisition and retention skills and employability skills. Students will also be connected with other One-Stop partners to provide assistance in identifying in-demand industries in the students' community and connect them to appropriate training designed to lead to unsubsidized employment and economic self-sufficiency. Further, students will be connected to their local Tennessee Career Center to assist them in job searches and other services designed to lead to unsubsidized employment and economic self-sufficiency. These connections to the local workforce development system and its functions may be made through referrals or memoranda of understanding.

Programs will provide instruction that promotes academic success so that ELLs may pursue a secondary diploma or its equivalent and/or post-secondary training. Digital literacy will be an integral part of instruction at all levels.

*(e) State Leadership. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.*

### *Description of Required Activities:*

1. The Division of Adult Education will align adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners by eligible providers partnering with their Tennessee Career Center for the referral of potential students and to assist students in building a resume and creating an account in Jobs4TN.gov. Eligible providers will also refer students completing the program to the Tennessee Career Center for career information and job placement. Eligible providers will refer eligible students completing the program to the Local Workforce Board or Vocational Rehabilitation as set forth in this State Plan, including the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities.
2. The Division of Adult Education in conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Human Resources will conduct high quality professional development programs in the form of Leadership/Management training for SDA supervisors to assist them in the efficient and effective operation of their SDA. This training will take place at two (2) Leadership Summits per year as well as at the Academy for Instructional Excellence and on a more individual basis between as needed.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

The Division of Adult Education will conduct two (2) Regional Instructional Workshops per year in which instructors will receive professional development training regarding instruction methods for adult learners. Instructors will also receive information about current models and best practices in instruction for adult learners.

The Division of Adult Education will conduct an Academy for Instructional Excellence wherein instructors will receive professional development training regarding instruction methods for adult learners. Instructors will also receive information about current models College and Career Readiness Standards and best practices in instruction for adult learners.

The Division of Adult Education will provide professional development opportunities to individual SDA's as needed in instructional methods for adult learners in mathematics and reading or other subjects as needs may arise.

These high quality professional development programs shall be established and operated to improve the instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under section 231(b), including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers or by personnel, and dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to such programs.

The Division of Adult Education will assess the professional development system in several ways. The Division of Adult Education, through regional consultants and other state staff, will conduct systematic site visits and desktop and onsite monitoring. Based upon the results of these visits and monitoring activities, the Division will provide professional development to meet demonstrated needs. Regional consultants and other state staff, will also conduct systematic follow-up site visits and desktop and onsite monitoring to ensure the efficacy of the professional development offered and to determine if additional professional development is necessary. Further, each professional development training provided will be evaluated by the audience through use of evaluation forms. Future trainings and professional development events will be revised or modified for improvement based upon the results of the evaluation.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

3. (a) The Division of Adult Education, through regional consultants and other state staff, will conduct systematic site visits and desktop and onsite monitoring. Based upon the results of these visits and monitoring activities, the Division will provide technical assistance to eligible providers to develop and disseminate instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education and staff training.
- b) The Division of Adult Education, through regional consultants and other state staff, will conduct systematic site visits and desktop and onsite monitoring. Based upon the results of these visits and monitoring activities, the Division will provide technical assistance to eligible providers regarding their role as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education and training services.
- c) The Division of Adult Education, through regional consultants and other state staff, will conduct systematic site visits and desktop and onsite monitoring. Based upon the results of these visits and monitoring activities, will provide technical assistance to eligible providers in the use of technology.
4. The Division of Adult Education, through regional consultants and other state staff, will conduct systematic site visits and desktop and onsite monitoring. Through these visits and monitoring activities, the Division will monitor and evaluate the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State. Each eligible provider will be monitored for compliance and appropriate technical assistance will be provided as needed.

### *Description of Permissible Activities:*

1. The Division of Adult Education will partner with State or regional networks of literacy resource centers to provide technical assistance, program support, EL/Civics and curriculum development as may be needed.
2. The Division of Adult Education will develop and implement a distance education program including professional development to support the use of instructional technology.
3. The Division of Adult Education will develop and disseminate curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

4. The Division of Adult Education will develop content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways.
5. The Division of Adult Education will provide assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of this title and in measuring the progress of those programs in achieving such objectives, including meeting the State adjusted levels of performance described in section 116(b)(3).
6. The Division of Adult Education will develop and implement a system to assist in the transition from adult education to postsecondary education, including linkages with postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education.
7. The Division of Adult Education will Integrate literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers.
8. The Division of Adult Education will conduct activities to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities.
9. The Division of Adult Education will identify curriculum frameworks and align rigorous content standards that –
  - i. specify what adult learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition; and
  - ii. take into consideration the following:
    - I. State adopted academic standards.
    - II. The current adult skills and literacy assessments used in the State.
    - III. The primary indicators of performance described in section 116.
    - IV. Standards and academic requirements for enrollment in nonremedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education supported by the State.
    - V. Where appropriate, the content of occupational and industry skill standards widely used by business and industry in the State.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

10. The Division of Adult Education will develop and pilot strategies for improving teacher quality and retention.
  11. The Division of Adult Education will develop and implement programs and services to meet the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities or English language learners, which may include new and promising assessment tools and strategies that are based on scientifically valid research, where appropriate, and identify the needs and capture the gains of such students at the lowest achievement levels.
  12. The Division of Adult Education will conduct outreach to instructors, students, and employers.
  13. The Division of Adult Education will conduct other activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of Title II of WIOA.
- (f) Assessing Quality. Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.*

Subrecipients will be subject to an on-site monitoring , at a minimum, once every three (3) years, depending on their risk assessments (risk assessments as well as site visits and desktop monitoring will be conducted once a year). The monitoring cycle will begin after the Monitoring Guide is approved for the State fiscal year starting October 1st. The Monitor will schedule those programs to be monitored for that fiscal year at his/her discretion with priority given to programs identified as a level one (1) risk.

For on-site monitoring, the Monitor will provide written notice to each entity being monitored thirty (30) days prior to a visit. The written notice will inform the entity of the dates for review, the programs that will be reviewed, the contract numbers that will be examined, and the estimated time of arrival. The Monitor is authorized to examine program records, interview participants and employees, and enter any site or premises which receive Adult Education funds. Random sampling techniques will be used to perform the review of program records. The Monitor will hold an exit conference with appropriate officials for each review conducted.



## ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

After the Monitor finishes the review, working papers, which include any documents collected during the monitoring of program that will assist the monitor in completing a report of a program's business, shall be established during the review and maintained by the TDLWD. A monitoring report indicating noteworthy practices, non-compliance and corrective actions as well as recommendations for improvement is issued within fifteen (15) working days of the completion of the monitor working papers. A corrective action plan (CAP) will be submitted within 30 (thirty) calendar days of the publishing of monitoring report that requires corrective action. A progress report will be issued to TDLWD during a designated time period (a minimum of 3 (three) months) as directed by the Monitor until the corrective action has been accomplished. Finally, a letter of resolution will be sent to the provider stating that all actions have been taken and the CAP is closed.

In addition to on-site monitoring, Desktop Monitoring will take place monthly to review the subrecipient's performance, specifically HSE attainment and level gains. Regional Consultants will also conduct informal site visits to review the operations of the program, provide technical assistance and identify professional development needs. The Regional Consultants will recommend and provide professional development opportunities as necessary.

## ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

### ***Adult Education & Family Literacy Program Certifications***

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;

### ***Adult Education & Family Literacy Program Assurances***

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions);
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;
4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities;
5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and
6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

**(a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council.** *All agencies except those agencies that are independent consumer-controlled commissions must include the following:*

- (1) Input provided by the state rehabilitation council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Combined State Plan. It must include recommendations from the council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other council reports that may have been developed as a part of the Council's functions.*
- (2) The Designated state unit's response to the Council's input or recommendations; and*
- (3) The Designated state unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.*

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Act), and 34 CFR §361.16.17 of its implementing regulations. The SRC gives advice to and works in partnership with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (referred to as "the Division" throughout this report) including input on the state plan.

- I. The SRC strongly recommends that the Program develops and implement marketing strategies to increase statewide awareness of VR services.

**RESPONSE:** As the Division strategically implements WIOA, business will become more of a customer of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. This will include studying the best marketing practices for new and existing services. The 17 Community Rehabilitation Training Centers and the Training Center at Smyrna will be involved in those strategies.

- II. Through the Program's implementation of WIOA/Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS), students, family members, and LEA's will have increased knowledge about vocational rehabilitation services and other resources.

**RESPONSE:** The Division will continue to implement PETS services through a phased approach beginning phase I with the Jackson/Madison School system. The Division is planning for full statewide implementation following the release of the final Federal Regulations in Spring of 2016.

- III. SRC commends the administration on committing to reviewing available resources related to Order of Selections.

**RESPONSE:** The Division continues its review of all available resources in respect to the order of selection and the new language in the law.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- IV. SRC commends the achievement of exceeding the Program's production closure goals.

**RESPONSE:** The Division remains committed to providing quality services that lead to competitive integrated employment. As one of the Core partners in WIOA, the Division is dedicated to assisting Tennessee in having a 21st Century Workforce.

- IV. SRC commends the Program for moving towards being fully staffed.

**RESPONSE:** As the Division moves forward with implementation of WIOA, the personnel needs of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program will be continuously evaluated.

- IV. SRC commends the Program for the development of the Business Unit and strongly recommend expanding national and statewide business partnerships.

**RESPONSE:** The Division is continuing the development of the Business Services Unit. WIOA establishes business as a customer of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, therefore the Business Services Unit will take a larger role in service delivery. The Division continues to participate in the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), a searchable database for clients and employers. In addition, Tennessee VR participates in the National Employment Team (NET) sponsored by the Council of Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). The NET gives access to national business partnerships. The SENET is specific to the southeast and increases statewide business partnerships.

- IV. SRC recommends that nominations to the board are reviewed and processed expeditiously.

**RESPONSE:** The Division will continue its efforts to work with the SRC to meet both internal and external deadlines. The Division would like to express its appreciation to the council for providing feedback and hopes it too will be mindful of providing information to the Division in a timely manner.

**(b) Request for Waiver of Statewideness.** *When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated state unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:*

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- (1) A local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;*
- (2) The designated state unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and*
- (3) Requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.*

The Division requests a waiver of statewideness in order to maintain twenty-four (24) Third Party Agreements with twenty-eight (28) Local Education Agencies (LEAs). These Third Party Agreements are designed to provide enhanced and concentrated services to Transition School to Work (TSW) students/clients covered by the agreements. The Division has a contract with each entity that is consistent with Federal regulations (34 CFR § 361.26) and includes the following provisions:

1. The vocational rehabilitation services to be provided are identified in Section A. Scope of Services in each contract (Each contract has been submitted separately to RSA to provide the written assurances requested for this attachment);
2. The LEA assures that non-Federal funds are made available to the Division by committing to their maintenance of effort in Section E.13 of the contract;
3. The LEA assures that the Division's approval is required before services are provided with the Division's counselor determining eligibility for each client served;
4. The LEA assures, through the Division's vocational rehabilitation counselors, that all other state plan requirements, including the Order of Selection policy, are applied to persons receiving services through the agreement; and
5. The LEA assures that reasonable accommodations will be provided.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

A list of the LEA contracts is provided below:

Carter County Schools
Cocke County Schools
Elizabethton City Schools
Greene County Schools
Hamblen County Schools
Unicoi County Schools
Washington County Schools
Anderson County Schools
Blount County Schools
Knox County Schools
Sevier County Schools
Union County Schools
Bledsoe County Schools
McMinn County Schools
Polk County School
Sequatchie County Schools
Henderson County Schools
Jackson/Madison County Schools
TN School for the Blind
TN School for the Deaf

In fiscal year 2014 the division changed the services offered under the TSW agreements. These new agreements provide more innovative services to the LEAs and the students.

While the Division provides transition services to all LEAs throughout the state, these transition contracts enable the provision of an expanded and more intense transition service to students/clients resulting from the inclusion of job coaches, case manager assistants, and transition specialists that would not otherwise be available to work with the vocational rehabilitation clients. These contracts enable the Division to have a greater presence within the schools and act as a stronger resource to the LEAs in the provision of transition services. The Division will continue to make efforts to increase the number of LEA Third Party Agreements.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

**(c) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.** *Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system with respect to:*

- (1) Federal, state, and local agencies and programs;*
- (2) State programs carried out under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998*
- (3) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture; and*
- (4) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth*
- (5) State use contracting programs.*

The Division has interagency cooperation, collaboration, and coordination with other state and local entities that are not components of the Statewide Workforce Investment System.

The Division works in cooperation with the following Federal, state, and local agencies and programs to provide services for individuals with significant disabilities:

1. The Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) - The Program is currently meeting with DCS staff to determine how to blend DCS Independent Living Services with VR program services. DCS staff has toured the TRC at Smyrna to learn more about the services provided at the TRC. The DCS Independent Living Coordinators statewide have an annual meeting and the VR Program has offered to host its Spring 2016 meeting. During that meeting all Independent Living staff will tour the facility in order to assist in a plan for coordination of services.
2. The Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) is providing services to individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI);
3. Post-secondary school systems and their governing bodies;
4. The Tennessee Department of Education (DOE) and LEAs for individuals who are transitioning from school to work.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

5. The Tennessee Department of Corrections (DOC) for individuals released from state correctional facilities;
6. The Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole for individuals released from state correctional facilities and monitored by the Board.
7. Local city police, county sheriffs and judge's programs for individuals being released from jails or on probation or trial diversion;
8. The Department of Human Services Division of Family Assistance and Child Support for individuals participating in services under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF);
9. The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) for individuals with mental illness and substance related disorders;
10. The Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
11. University of Tennessee, Center for Literacy, Education and Employment for marketing to businesses the services provided by the Division, to recruit businesses to hire the Division's clients and to provide staff training and development and consultation services for community supported employment service providers;
12. Tennessee AgrAbility program for professions in agriculture production. This is a cooperative effort of the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension Program, and Easter Seals in Tennessee, Special Technology Access Center, East Tennessee Technology Access Center and other collaborative entities of the Division;
13. TennesseeWorks for employment partnerships and collaborative efforts to increase access to meaningful work and internet-based information.
14. Community Rehabilitation Agencies of Tennessee that administers the Tennessee State Use Program, directs government procurement toward organizations serving individuals with disabilities.
15. Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities that promotes public policies to increase and support the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in their communities and works with public and private groups across the State to find necessary supports for individuals with disabilities and their families, so that they may have equal access to public education, employment, housing, health care, and all other aspects of community life.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

16. Tennessee Council for the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing (TCDDBBH) and Centers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind that operate in six communities and provide interpreter services that compliment those already offered by Vocational Rehabilitation staff.
17. Tennessee Technology Access Programs (TTAP) that operate in five communities and provide assistive technology services and evaluations. These programs provided the contracted services with the Program within the Division that administers activities described in Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act.
18. Tennessee Centers for Independent Living (CILs) that operate in six local communities are operated primarily by persons with disabilities and provide a variety of independent living services.
19. Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) throughout the state that provide rehabilitation services under a Letter of Agreement.

#### **(d) Coordination with Education Officials. Describe:**

- (1) *the designated state unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of the individual plans for employment for the students.*
- (2) *Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:*
  - (A) *Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;*
  - (B) *Transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs;*
  - (C) *Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, reasonable accommodations, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;*
  - (D) *Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.*



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Division maintains an ongoing interagency agreement with the Tennessee Department of Education, Tennessee Department of Children's Services, Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration, Bureau of TennCare, Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Tennessee Department of Health, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and Tennessee Department of Corrections. The agreement, along with the Division's policy manual and Standard Procedures Directives, outlines the plans, policies and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the participation of the Division staff in transition planning and the referral of students with disabilities to the Division for a determination of eligibility for VR services.

When a student who is eligible based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) standards reaches the age of fourteen (14), the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, as defined by 34 CFR § 300.344, formulates a statement of transition service needs as a component of the IEP. The Division's staff is invited and to the extent possible participates in these IEP meetings.

The Division has been under an Order of Selection since 2001. Under the current Order, the Division is able to provide direct services to those eligible individuals in Priority Category (PC) 1 and Priority Category 2. The Division was able to open Priority Category 2 effective September 30, 2012. There was a release of clients from the waiting list in Priority Category 3 on October 1, 2013. From January 2015- March 2015 all PCs were closed for the provision of new services. This was a brief closing and Priority Categories 1 and 2 were re-opened in March 2015. The opening and release of clients from the waiting list allows for the provision of direct services to significantly more students with disabilities. The Division provides information and referral services to help all applicants find services through other agencies and entities. The inclusion of Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) will allow for the provision of the five stated PETS services for those students with a disability who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services.

The IEP team, which should include the Division's staff (when available), parent, and student, determines if the student should be referred for VR services. The Division's staff should inform the student and parent(s), preferably at the IEP meeting of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program.

VR staff make every effort to attend IEP meetings; however, due to staff resources, this is not always possible. When VR staff is unable to attend an IEP meeting, information regarding VR services is made available to the student and parent(s).

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### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Transition School to Work Unit within the VR program is working with the Department of Education on how to incorporate VR services information into the IEP meeting. The Director of the Unit has been trained on Easy IEPs. In the provision of the Pre-Employment Transition Services, students with disabilities and their families will start receiving information on VR services as early as age fourteen. Information will be made available to middle school staff in order to assist with the beginning the transition.

Beginning in October 2015, these IEP meetings will include information on PETS services that are available at age 14. PETS services are available to students with disabilities ages 14-22 and can be provided without an application for VR services. For those individuals who are interested in applying for services, the information should include the application procedures, the eligibility requirements including the Order of Selection, and the potential scope of services that may be available. As soon as possible after referral, the Division takes an application from the student and determines eligibility as well as whether the student is in an open priority category. If the student is in an open priority category, the Division's staff assists in the formulation of the student's IEP and the student's vocational rehabilitation Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) as soon as it is determined that the student can benefit from services provided by the Division in preparation for exiting the school system and transitioning into training and/or employment. Services provided by the Division may include attending job fairs, community vocational adjustment training and pre-employment, and college readiness and job readiness training.

The LEA's involved in the interagency agreement with the Division should cooperate in developing and coordinating services for students and youth with disabilities within each respective agency's legal authority. The ultimate goal of each agency participating in the agreement is to provide, or cause to be provided, a continuum of appropriate services leading to transition from school into employment. The agreement provides for:

1. Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
2. Consultation and technical assistance on providing reasonable accommodations;
3. Transition planning by personnel of the Division of Rehabilitation Services and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004 (P.L. 108-446);

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

4. The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
5. Procedures for outreach and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

A VR counselor is assigned to work with each local education agency (LEA) for the purposes of referrals, eligibility determination and the provision of services to eligible students. VR counselors provide technical assistance to school personnel and LEAs to help them identify appropriate referrals for pre-employment transition services (PETS) and vocational rehabilitation services. The VR counselor also provides information and referral to students not eligible for VR services.

It is the Division's policy that the development and approval of the IPE for each student determined eligible for VR services occurs as soon as it is determined that the student can benefit from services provided by the Division. An IPE must be developed before the student leaves the school setting.

The interagency agreement identifies the financial responsibility of the Tennessee Department of Education (DOE) to ensure that individuals who are IDEIA eligible receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. A free appropriate public education means regular and special education and related services which:

1. Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge to the parent;
2. Meet the standards established by state law, including the requirements of IDEIA Part B and the Rules, Regulations and Minimum Standards for the Governance of Tennessee Public Schools, issued by DOE;
3. Include preschool, elementary school, and secondary school (including appropriate vocational, career or work experience education); and
4. Are provided in conformity with an IEP.



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### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The interagency agreement relates the financial responsibility of the Division to ensure that individuals who are IDEIA eligible and also meet the Division's requirements for PETS and VR services will receive the appropriate services from the Division. VR Services means any services necessary to determine eligibility and those services described in an IPE necessary to assist an individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual. Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) is a set of 5 coordinated services available to students with a disability ages 14-22 who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services.

The LEA is responsible for the educational costs related to the provision of special education and related services for the individual attending school. The agreement states that if another public agency is obligated under federal or state law or assigned responsibility under state policy to provide or pay for any services that are considered special education or related services and are necessary for ensuring FAPE to students who are IDEIA eligible, the public agency shall fulfill that obligation or responsibility, directly, through contract or by another arrangement. However, failure of that public agency to pay for that service does not relieve the LEA of its obligation to provide that service to an individual with a disability in a timely manner.

The Division is responsible for all costs necessary for eligibility determination, provision of services under an IPE and provision of the 5 services available under PETS. The Division must take into account comparable services and benefits [34 CFR § 361.53 (c) (1)], available under any other program that does not interrupt or delay the progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the IPE or the goals set forth as a part of PETS service provision.

The Division's staff maintains a working relationship with special education supervisors, vocational education supervisors, directors, secondary school guidance counselors, and LEA administrators for the purpose of providing outreach for students with disabilities and technical assistance to school personnel to assist LEAs in preparing students with disabilities for career opportunities. The Division participates in in-service training programs for LEAs, as well as in statewide special education conferences for the purpose of providing information regarding VR services. The Division also participates in and organizes local community job fairs, job clubs, and attends civic club/organization meetings to inform students and parents of the purpose of the VR program, the application procedures, the eligibility requirements, and the potential scope of services that may be available.

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### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Other activities to identify students with physical, mental or emotional disabilities who do not meet the criteria for special education services (commonly referred to as Section 504 services) include completion of student health survey forms coordinated with guidance counselors or general education teachers.

It is the Division's intent to develop relationships with LEA middle or junior high schools to provide consultation for students with disabilities who are about to enter high school.

The Division has two dedicated full-time state office positions that coordinate transition services statewide. One position is focused on the provision of the Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities. The other position serves as liaison with the Tennessee Department of Education and other partners in the interagency agreement to provide technical assistance and training related to vocational rehabilitation services. Both positions work with VR counselors and supervisory staff to improve access and services for students with disabilities. In addition, both positions identify, arrange for, or provide training to the Division's counselors, educators, students with disabilities, and families in a variety of areas related to transition services. On a yearly basis, staff in the Transition Unit provides presentation at the Partners in Education Conference that is sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Education.

The Division currently contracts with twenty-eight (28) LEAs as part of its transition initiative. The contracts provide for a menu of needed and additional services chosen by the LEA to assist in the transitioning of students from school to work. All services provided under these contracts/agreements have a VR employment focus. All services provided under these contracts/agreements are in keeping with all state plan requirements to include our state's Order of Selection requirements. Services provided under these contracts/agreements are only available to applicants for, or recipients of, services of the Division. The Division will strive to increase the number of contracts with LEAs as allowed by the Division's and LEA's funding availability.

Although the Division utilizes contracts with LEAs as part of its transition initiative, all decisions affecting eligibility for VR services, the nature and scope of available services, and the provision of these services remain the sole responsibility of the VR counselor employed by the Division. VR staff is responsible for determinations to close cases and for all allocations of expenditures for services.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

**(e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations.** *Describe the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.*

Based on information gathered by continuing statewide studies, the annual facility survey of public and private community rehabilitation programs and the on-going monitoring and annual evaluation of effectiveness, the Division continues to maximize the use of community rehabilitation programs to provide rehabilitation services in the most integrated setting possible consistent with the informed choices of the individual.

The Division is utilizing community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) throughout the state as follows:

I. The Division's Facility Program:

- A. The Tennessee Rehabilitation Center (Center) at Smyrna is a state operated comprehensive residential rehabilitation facility that serves individuals with significant disabilities. The facility is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and includes programs of comprehensive vocational evaluation services, employee development services, and employment skills training services. The Center offers the following program and support services:

**Program Services**

- Comprehensive vocational evaluation and mobile evaluation services
- Employment Readiness Program (ERP) a pre-employment and life skills training program to encourage positive work behaviors and independence.
- Occupational skills training in automotive maintenance/detailing, manufacturing, garden center services, retail, business education, commercial cleaning, food service, and warehouse training
- Physical Rehabilitation Services to include: Occupational and Physical Rehabilitation, Spinal Cord Injury Program, Personal Care Attendant training, Vision Rehabilitation, Independent Living Skills, Community Re-entry training, Equipment Operation Screens and Adaptive Equipment Assessments.
- Traumatic brain injury services to include: Case Management, Occupational, Physical, and Speech/Language Pathology to include cognitive therapy; Vision Rehabilitation, Therapeutic Golf Rehabilitation, Vocational Evaluation and Assessments; Behavioral instruction, Job Skills/Readiness training and Community Re-entry training.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- Vision impairment services to include: pre-vocational assessment, training for independent living to include adaptive kitchen skills and home management skills; braille, Orientation & Mobility training, Adaptive communication skills, assistive technology assessments and training; computer training; and prerequisite evaluation and training for entry into Tennessee Business Enterprises.

#### ***Support Services***

- Student Life Services (Residential Living)
- Student Health Services to include Medical Dormitory
- Psychiatric and Physician Services
- Case management services
- Psychiatric and physician services
- Recreation therapy and leisure-time skills
- Remedial education
- Job seeking skills training
- Psychological services
- Independent living skills training
- Autism Support Services
- Deaf Service
- Behavioral Education

The Center operates at a program capacity of 190 individuals with an annual enrollment ranging from 700 – 1000 Tennesseans with significant disabilities each year.

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The Center is a member of the National Consortium of State Operated Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centers. An Advisory Council is utilized to provide valuable feedback used in guiding decision making in Center operations and program development. In addition, the Center conducts exit customer satisfaction surveys on all individuals completing services, and conducts client family surveys, as well as a referring counselor needs assessment and satisfaction surveys on an annual basis. Feedback obtained from these survey instruments is also used in guiding decisions about current and future support services and program services operations, as well as accessibility and physical plant operations.

- B. A network of 17 Tennessee Rehabilitation Centers (TRCs) are located across the state providing day services to eligible individuals with significant disabilities, seeking competitive integrated employment. All community TRC facilities are accredited by the Commission of Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in programs of comprehensive vocational evaluation and employee development services. The TRCs are supported by a combination of appropriated local and Federal funds.

#### ***Program Services***

- Comprehensive vocational evaluation services provide an individualized, timely and systematic process for identifying viable vocational options and developing employment goals and objectives. An accredited comprehensive vocational evaluation service is used to examine a wide range of employment alternatives using the following techniques:
  1. Assessment of functional/occupational performance in real or simulated environments
  2. Psychometric testing
  3. Preference and interest inventories
  4. Personality testing
  5. Extensive personal interviews
  6. Other appropriate evaluation tests depending on the individual
  7. Analysis of prior work experience and transferable skills

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### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- Employee Development Services
  1. Services are based upon individual needs and can include comprehensive employment services or any individual component
  2. Employee development services and/or job readiness instruction
  3. Work skills development through a facility workshop: including the use of contract work, job readiness assessment and training
  4. Community Employment Services include: (job development and placement)
  5. Job readiness assessment and instruction includes: interview skills instruction, completing a job application, developing a resume, grooming and hygiene for the work place, self-determination training, developing and using job-finding networks and resources
  6. Job readiness assessment and instruction
  7. Job development and placement into competitive employment through the identification of employment opportunities in the local job market
  8. Development of realistic employment goals
  9. Establishment of service plans to achieve employment outcomes
  10. Identification of resources to achieve and maintain employment.

TRC facilities conduct exit customer satisfaction surveys on individuals completing services from each program of service provided, completes a yearly survey with clients receiving services, referring counselors, contract providers, funding sources, employers, and other identified stakeholders. Feedback obtained from the surveys is used to improve program services.



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## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

### II. Service Contracts:

- A. The Division plans to continue service contracts with the following community rehabilitation programs to ensure quality services statewide provided funding is available:
- Clovernook
  - Tennessee Department of Education
  - National Federation for the Blind
  - Southeast TN Human Resource Agency
  - Technology Centers: East Tennessee Technology Access in Knoxville; Signal Centers; Technology Access Center of Middle Tennessee in Nashville; West Tennessee Special Technology Access Resource (STAR) Center in Jackson; and Mid-South ACT in Memphis
  - Tennessee Disability Coalition Benefits to Work
  - University of Memphis Training and Technical Assistance Project
  - University of Tennessee, Center for Literacy Studies
  - Vanderbilt University Return to Work Program
  - Vocational Consulting Services
- B. The Division has two service contracts with community rehabilitation programs (Clovernook and Volunteer Blind Industries, Inc.) serving visually impaired clients in the areas of evaluation, adjustment, activities of daily living, orientation and mobility, training, job development and employment.

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# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

### III. Letters of Agreement

A. Beginning in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2013, the Division began a rewrite of the Letters of Understanding (LOU), to change them to Letters of Agreement (LOA). The LOA has the same purpose as the LOU in that it is an agreement between the Division and the Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) and in cooperation with the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration. The LOA describes the functions and responsibilities of the Division and the CRP as well as the scope of services and payment methodology agreed upon by both the Division and CRP in a joint effort of improving and expanding employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Some of the differences in the LOAs from the LOUs are:

- Concentrated focus on outcomes rather than services
- Different payment schedule based on Priority Category assignment of the client
- Bonus for exceptional wages
- Streamlined application and approval process

CRP's must apply and be approved for a LOA each year. The application period is in the Fall (October, November). LOAs are effective during the calendar year each year, January through December.

B. For Calendar Year 2015, the Division has 111 LOAs with CRPs throughout the state.

- 58 LOAs for Vocational Assessment
- 26 LOAs for Vocational Adjustment Services
- 60 LOAs for Trial Work Experiences
- 106 LOAs for Job Placement Services
- 85 LOAs for supported employment services

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Division's Facility Programs, Service Contracts and Letters of Agreements are used to provide needed services such as, but not limited to:

- Vocational evaluation
- Personal and vocational adjustment training
- Transportation and daily meals
- Vocational training
- Job readiness training
- Job development and job placement
- Supported employment
- Rehabilitation technology
- Orientation and mobility
- Activities of daily living
- Trial work experiences
- Follow-up

The VR Program is currently defining the Pre-Employment Transition Services and the Follow Along services that are new in the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. The Program is working with CRPs, the TRC at Smyrna, and the 17 Community TRCs on provision of these new services.

**(f) Arrangements and Cooperative.** *Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services. Describe the designated state agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.*



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### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Division has interagency arrangements and coordination with the following entities for the provision of supported employment services and extended services:

1. The Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
2. Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities for individuals with disabilities that began during the early developmental years;
3. The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for individuals with mental illness and substance related disorders;
4. The Tennessee Employment Consortium, an independent association of community rehabilitation providers and state agencies developed jointly by the Division, the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities to provide a forum for all stakeholders to review and discuss state policies and share best practices;
5. University of Tennessee, Center for Literacy Education and Employment to provide staff training and development and consultation services for community supported employment service providers; and
6. Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, to provide customized employment services through their system of Career Centers on behalf of VR clients and business and industry.

The Division has encouraged the establishment and development of Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to improve and expand services through Letters of Agreement. The Letter of Agreement (LOA) is an agreement between the Division and the CRP and in cooperation with the Department of Finance and Administration. The LOA describes the functions and responsibilities of the Division and the CRP as well as the scope of services and payment methodology agreed upon by both the Division and CRP in a joint effort of improving and expanding supported employment and extended services for individuals with disabilities. The Division currently has 85 LOAs for supported employment services. The Division continues its' efforts to increase Supported Employment (S.E.) providers and anticipates the numbers of providers will increase. VR is actively pursuing a number of other providers for underserved areas across the state. In conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Developmental Disabilities (DIDD), the VR Program is receiving technical assistance on capacity building and provider transformation from the Office of Disability Policy (ODEP). ODEP is housed in the US Department of Labor.

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**(g) Coordination with Employers.** *Describe how the designated State Unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:*

(1) *VR Services; and*

(2) *Transition Services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.*

In Tennessee, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program employs Business Employment Consultants (BECs) in order to facilitate the relationships between businesses and the VR Program.

- Role of the State Business Employment Consultant and Business Employment Consultants (BECs):

Facilitate employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by providing services and resources to assist Tennessee businesses in recruiting, hiring, returning to work, and retaining employees with disabilities.

- Number and location of the BECs:

Currently, there are 14 BEC positions located in Elizabethton, Johnson City, Cleveland, Chattanooga, Winchester, Cookeville, Murfreesboro, Lawrenceburg, Clarksville, Paris, Union City, Dyersburg and two positions located at the TN Rehabilitation Center in Smyrna. There is also a Statewide Business Employment Consultant located in state office, which assists with statewide participation in the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) that is managed by the Consortium of State Agencies of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR).

According to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, there are 20 industries that are projected to create a total of 258,080 jobs, or 91 percent of all expected job creation through 2022. The VR program will focus outreach activities on these 20 industries. For a listing of the industries refer Tennessee Three Digit Industries Expected to Add the Most New Jobs, 2014 to 2022 included in Appendix 2.

WIOA expands the VR Program's customer base as Business becomes a recognized partner of the program. As this concept continues to grow, the VR Program is developing more Initiatives with Businesses in order to provide more opportunities for competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities.

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- Business Initiatives:

The Division conducts several business initiatives across the state such as Walgreens' REDI programs, Project Search East TN Children's Hospital and UT Medical Center, Kroger/Peyton's distribution centers, AutoZone distribution centers, and Vanderbilt University.

- Role of the state agency with 503 compliance:

Tennessee VR BECs work with contacts established through the US Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs as a resource to assist federal contractors in addressing the Final Rule of Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The BECs participate in regional/local meetings to provide information about services and job candidates available through Tennessee's VR services. The BECs assist in recruiting efforts by linking businesses with qualified applicants.

- Additional business initiatives for the agency are:

The TN Rehabilitation Center at Smyrna has developed customized training with Schwan Cosmetics and other companies to develop their hiring requirements which build capacities for diversity within companies.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) is a set of 5 coordinated services available to students with a disability ages 14-22 who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. Fifteen percent (15%) of the Basic VR grant must be set aside for the provision of PETS services. The 15% set aside consists of the salaries, benefits and travel of the individuals who are coordinating or providing direct client services. In addition, the 15% aside accounts for the following 5 services:

1. Job Exploration Counseling, which may include Work Strategy Assessments, Academic Assessments and Vocational Counseling and Guidance.
2. Work-Based Learning Experiences, which may include in-school and after-school opportunities and experiences outside of the traditional school settings. Examples of Work-Based Learning Experiences include On-the-Job Trainings, Apprenticeships, Internships, Summer Work Experiences, Work-Based Trainings, Job Search Assistance, Job Placement Assistance, On-the-Job Supports and Customized Employment.
3. Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities, which may include Vocational Counseling and Guidance and Academic Assessments.



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### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

4. Workplace Readiness Training for the development of social skills and independent living skills. This may include Job Readiness Training and Life Skills Training.
5. Training on Self-Advocacy, which may also include Peer Mentoring, Self-Determination Training and Life Skills Training.

**(h) Interagency Cooperation.** *Describe how the designated State Unit will collaborate with the State Agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:*

- (1) The State Medicaid plan under XIX of the Social Security Act*
- (2) The State Agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities*
- (3) The State Agency responsible for providing mental health services.*

Tennessee is an Employment First State and has an established Employment First Task Force. The Employment First Task force facilitated the completion of a Memorandum of Understanding for services to youth with disabilities between the following state agencies:

- Tennessee Department of Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Tennessee Department of Education
- Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

In Tennessee the agency that administers the State Medicaid plan is the Bureau of TennCare. The VR Program is developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of TennCare. The VR Program has developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tennessee Department of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities.

In conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the VR program is providing supported employment to individuals with severe and persistent mental illness under the Individual Placement and Supports (IPS) Model. In Federal Fiscal Year 2015 there were 351 total SE cases in Status 26 (VR program only). At least 15.38% or 54, were from IPS. The VR Program plans to expand the IPS program into other areas of the state in Federal Fiscal Year 2016.

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**(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.** *Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State Unit, including the following:*

**(1) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

**(A) Qualified Personnel Needs.** *Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:*

- i. The number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;*
- ii. The number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and*
- iii. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.*

The Division received 7,692 applications for new services in FY2014 and provided services to 21,545 eligible individuals. In FY2015, the division received 6,782 applications and provided services to 19,500 eligible individuals.

The Division currently has 596 allocated positions. Of these 596 positions, 172 are currently vacant (28.8%). Of those positions 243 positions provide direct client services. 100 of the direct client services positions are currently vacant. All VRC position are filled at the Master's degree level. The CSPD requirement in Tennessee is eligibility to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (C.R.C.) exam. All current counselors will meet the CSPD requirement by January 1, 2018. When new staff are hired at the Master's degree level, if they do not meet the CSPD at the time of hire, and they have 36 months to meet the requirements

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The Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services utilizes a department wide on-line computer system known as Edison for collecting and tracking all personnel actions relative to positions being vacated (resignations, terminations, retirement) as well as tracking personnel data relative to filling vacant positions (new hires, position transfers and/or promotions).

Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
Administrative	17	3	
Clerical	77	23	
Rehabilitation Assistants	66	14	
Supervisors	86	18	
Support	20	5	
Instructor	44	5	
VR Direct Client Services Staff	243	100	
Medical	28	4	
BEP Specialist/Consultant	15	0	

(B) *Personnel Development. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:*

- i. *A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;*
- ii. *The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program and*
- iii. *The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certifications or licensure or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive certification or licensure.*

(2) *Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel. Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the Coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.*



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In Tennessee, there are two universities that have Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) certified programs offering a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. One is The University of Tennessee at Knoxville, which is located in the eastern part of the state; and the other is The University of Memphis, located in the western part of the state.

The University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK) has a current enrollment of 17 students in its distance education program, 5 of whom are employees of the Division. Of the 17 students currently enrolled, 5 have disabilities and 3 students represent a minority. For the federal fiscal year (10/13 – 9/14), 3 students graduated from the program. All 3 graduates met the academic criteria to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam.

The University of Memphis currently has 18 graduate students in their on-campus program. None (0%) of these students are employed by the Division.

Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
University of Memphis	18	0	0	57
University of TN – Knoxville	17	5	5	15

- (3) *Personnel Standards. Describe the state agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(8) and to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:*
- (A) *Standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and*
  - (B) *The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.*

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Members of the Division's leadership team have quarterly contact with the program administrators at the University of Tennessee and the University of Memphis for the purpose of planning and sharing information relative to personnel development activities. The Rehabilitation Services Training Unit staff also meets or corresponds with University of Tennessee and University of Memphis staff for the purpose of gathering information regarding the number of students enrolled in their respective rehabilitation counselor education programs, as well as the number who graduated from their programs during the past year.

To advance recruitment activities, the Division has dedicated a program specialist position. This program specialist is actively seeking out other masters level programs across the nation; primarily those with RSA funded slots, to increase the number of incumbent staff in masters programs. Other duties of the program specialist include developing/distributing recruiting brochures at job fairs, speaking to graduate level programs to promote state employment in the rehabilitation field and encouraging incumbent staff to take advantage of graduate level training opportunities in rehabilitation counseling distance learning programs. The Division recognizes that recruitment activities are also the responsibility of counseling, supervisory and management level staff across the state with these personnel involved in recruitment activities in their regional and local communities.

The Tennessee Excellence, Accountability and Management (TEAM) Act of 2012 is designed to establish methods for attracting, selecting, retaining and promoting the best applicants and employees based on performance and equal opportunity, free from coercive political influence, and to provide technically competent employees to render impartial service to the public at all times. The TEAM Act will give agencies greater flexibility in personnel management and increase customer focused effectiveness and efficiency in a best practice environment, and by doing so, will allow the Division to strengthen its efforts to hire and retain top quality counselors.

The Division has two interns this fiscal year. One intern is from Georgia State University. His practicum and internship is under the guidance of Amy Rader, Regional Supervisor for Knox County and surrounding counties. The second intern is a graduate student at the University of Memphis. She is supervised by Greg Wright, Regional Supervisor for the Memphis/Shelby County office. Procedures have been developed to expedite the approval process for future graduate rehab counseling student interns as they assist field offices with basic counselor duties. Furthermore, the regional supervisors have opportunities to see first-hand if the interns would be beneficial additions to their counseling staff.

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Current incentives for incumbent staff to participate in a Master's degree program include financial assistance with tuition, books, fees, and minimal educational leave. Funding for a pay incentive based upon successful completion of a Master's Degree program was approved in January 2005 for graduates and has been requested and approved for each successive graduate.

The Division continues to explore retention strategies for qualified staff. Exemplary counselors are given priority for attendance at various out-service training events in recognition of their hard work, dedication and commitment to assisting individuals with disabilities in achieving their employment goals. Additionally, the Division is able to reimburse employees (approved by their supervisor) for the cost of the initial Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) examination fee (one time only) and/or for CRC renewal fees.

*(4) Staff Development. Describe the state agency's policies, procedures and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(c) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:*

*(A) A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carry out State Programs under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998: and*

*(B) Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State Unit professionals and paraprofessionals.*

The Office of Professional Development (OLPD), is a section of the Office of General Counsel (OGC) - Human Resources and Professional Development (HRPD) division of the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS). OLPD provides staff development and training for DHS employees, and in so doing, conducts training needs assessments and provides training opportunities (mandatory and elective) to enhance staff competencies and skill sets. OLPD has dedicated staff to provide support for Rehabilitation Services and works in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Services division in the development of training necessary to ensure effective, outcome driven results. The development of core competencies for effective service delivery is an integral focus of Rehabilitation Services training. Additionally, HRPD provides performance management support to all DHS employees in alignment with the goals and priorities established by the Governor and the Commissioner of DHS. HRPD has processes in place to create individual performance plans and on-going evaluations of employees' performance in each division, including Rehabilitation Services.



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Additional data is collected relative to training needs through the following methods:

1. Input from staff in all job classifications compiled into a statewide training needs report;
2. State rehabilitation management and administrative staff input;
3. State Human Resources Department training division mandates;
4. Rehabilitation Services Administration guidelines;
5. Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council;

Program case reviews conducted by the Performance Management Unit (QUISS) division of DHS are also utilized to identify strengths and deficiencies among staff and related training needs.

Staff was encouraged to give feedback on what they thought were their training needs. Outcomes of this internal review yielded the following training related recommendations:

OLPD sends out a training effectiveness survey that asks respondents of training needs.

1. Additional human resources to meet statewide need for new and incumbent staff training.
2. More timely delivery of training for new counselors; the OLPD standard is to provide (or at least begin) new employee training within 90 days of hire.
3. Expand the new counselor curriculum to be more comprehensive /incorporate more hands-on activities to reinforce knowledge and skill sets; the comprehensive New Counselor Institute NCI 6 week training curriculum was presented to learners in 2013 and has continued ensuring current policy by completing revisions prior to each new session.
4. Provide refresher training for incumbent staff relative to the Division's policy and other disability related topics; and Counselor Policy Refresher training was developed and scheduled for quarterly or semi-annual facilitation. To this point, one statewide refresher training consisting of three sessions was approved and was held in September of 2014.
5. Additional/follow up training regarding the new online case management system.

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As a result of these staff recommendations, the Rehabilitation Services Training Unit, within HRPD, is implementing the following strategies:

1. There are four VR training positions and one program coordinator. Of the four VR/ OLPD trainers, in addition to maintaining current policy and TRIMS knowledge to facilitate segments of NCI and Counselor Refresher training, each trainer is assigned a specific area of focus based on specialized training and/or experience. Currently, one trainer is assigned to work specifically with sensory loss units; one is assigned to work with community TRC; one with Smyrna TRC; and one with TSW program in light of WIOA policy implications.
2. All new counselors will be expected to participate in the new counselor training within the first 3 months of employment.
3. The previous two one-week training sessions for new counselors has been significantly expanded (2012/2013) to a new curriculum. The curriculum is an intensive, hands-on training, utilizing a variety of training modalities to include navigation of the new online case management system, case studies/scenarios, and individual and group discussions. Additionally, PowerPoint presentations, facilitator guides, participant guides, handouts, assessment questions and related materials are being revised to include recent policy revisions and updates as changes occur.
4. OLPD staff has provided regional and district policy trainings per contacts with regional and district supervisors to determine and address training needs.
5. OLPD has had in place for several years a training website entitled the Training Resource Website (TRW) whereby all training materials are posted to enable trainers and supervisors to access training modules for disability related training topics.
6. Following implementation of the online case management system, follow up regional training sessions were conducted to further illustrate how to navigate the system and provide answers to staff questions. A new state office position was also added in recent years to serve as a resource to field staff in providing guidance in navigating/utilizing the new online case management system. TRIMS is being updated to include forms and processes that are consistent with the recent policy revisions.

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As part of the new Performance and Quality Improvement process, focus groups were formed to identify new employee specific training needs relative to each job position/classification. These focus groups laid the foundation for the development of a progressive training curriculum to include standards for measuring performance at three, six and nine month increments during the probationary process. Utilizing this process to identify specific training needs and a subsequent training curriculum relative to each job position/classification has proven to be a more effective means of identifying and addressing training needs than staff surveys conducted in the past.

Below are the top 5 training priorities based on staff and management feedback:

1. Leadership/supervisory training provided through the New Supervisor Academy (NSA); All new supervisors must attend a three week New Supervisor Academy session, delivered by OLPD, to enhance and develop their leadership skills.
2. Caseload management (moving a case through the VR process, critical casework activities such as eligibility determination, plan development, budgeting, etc.). This training is provided as part of the New Counselor Institute (NCI) and as needed to incumbent VR counselor staff.
3. Communication skills/customer service (interviewing skills, effective communication, how to deal with difficult people, cultural diversity) VR/OLPD staff has information included in the NCI, counselor refresher and community TRC staff training modules regarding appropriate and professional communication, interviewing, and cultural awareness. The Tennessee Department of Human Resources, DoHR has courses available which are currently being delivered to management staff by OLPD staff members, who have become DoHR certified trainers, on topics of Customer Service, Respectful Workplace, and Civil Rights.
4. Employment / placement training (including disability disclosure) NCI covers some on disability disclosure. The module recently developed on job development and placement for sensory loss staff could be modified for delivery to all counseling staff as well as Business Employment Consultants.
5. General on-boarding for new employees (vision/values, people first language, respectful workplace, customer service, ethics, and departmental and division organization). On-boarding training has been revised and is being reviewed by DOHR. NCI addresses vision and values and people first language as well as departmental and divisional organization. As is noted above Customer Service and Respectful Workplace are provided by certified facilitators as part of the onboarding training.



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The Division continues to provide on-going training and technical assistance regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act to staff and the general public, including business and industry. As part of the on-boarding process, counselors also receive training relative to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and subsequent amendments.

The Division continues to contract with technology centers across the state for training and technical assistance in rehabilitation technology services. Rehabilitation technology contracts are in place with the East Tennessee Technology Access Center (Knoxville), Technology Access Center of Middle Tennessee (Nashville), West Tennessee STAR Center (Jackson), Signal Center (Chattanooga), and Mid-South Access Center for Technology (Memphis).

The Division's employees continue to receive specialized training in assessment and vocational evaluation activities. Through a partnership with the University of Memphis, vocational evaluators receive extensive instruction in the appropriate selection of assessment tools, interviewing skills, evaluation techniques and report writing. The contract with the University of Memphis has expired. Current training on Vocational assessment and evaluation is being provided by Tami Long, the OLPD/RS training director who has nine years of experience as an evaluator, and maintains both the CRC and the Vocational Evaluation Specialist certification (CVE) through The Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. Statewide Vocational Evaluator training was provided in September 2015 for all community TRC evaluators and managers. Training covered interviewing skills, scheduling, evaluation techniques, choosing assessments, and report writing.

Evaluators complete a competency examination with subsequent training provided based on the individualized needs of each employee. New counselors receive, via a new counselor training program, training relative to assessments, vocational evaluation and interpreting medical and psychological reports to assist them in acquiring skills to identify the specific strengths and weaknesses of individuals with disabilities. Training in the areas of vocational counseling, job placement and other topics relevant to client service delivery continue to be focal areas for the Division. The training noted above was delivered to incumbent staff as the pilot for the new VE training. This training will become the new employee training and will be provided within 90 days of hire as approved by program. All evaluators will be expected to submit reports for review and will receive training based on individual needs.

Division employees are encouraged to participate in web-based training events as offered through the Department and other Agencies, as appropriate. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program was approved for a one-time no cost extension to the training grant funds offered from RSA. These funds will allow the program to continue to provide training to staff.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Office of Learning and Professional Development (OLPD) is currently examining the existing structure of collecting personnel and training data. A new database for collection of personnel, professional, and training data is currently being developed. The new system will provide a more effective way to track and report the staff data for TDRS. Edison's Enterprise Learning Management has been in place for several years. It is the system that allows for documenting available courses, learner enrollment, and learner participation in various classes. Each learner has a "My Learning" page that documents all sessions of training (classroom or online) attended and completed.

The Division has posted information memoranda on its intranet website to provide staff with an easily accessible means of acquiring information on current research, resources and related activities in the vocational rehabilitation field. Leadership staff also disseminates new information (such as the latest Institute on Rehabilitation Issues publications) through electronic conveyance. Employees, particularly those with specialized job responsibilities, are encouraged to attend conferences, seminars and training workshops relative to their specialty areas. Local, regional and statewide meetings provide an additional avenue for keeping employees informed of new developments in the vocational rehabilitation field.

- (5) *Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs. Describe how the designated state unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.*

The Division has policies and procedures to ensure that it includes among its personnel, or has readily available, the services of (1) Individuals able to communicate in the native languages of applicants and eligible individuals who have limited English proficiency through Avaza Language Services; and (2) Individuals able to communicate with applicants or eligible individuals in appropriate modes of communication.

During staff orientation, new counselor training, annual Title VI training and other training activities, Division staff members are informed of specific procedures to be followed to communicate with limited English speaking individuals. Telephonic translation services are available through Avaza Language Services. All regions have received orientation packages to be used to train all of their staff in the use of this service.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Division continues to recognize its responsibility for employing or obtaining the services of sign language interpreters, which fall within the definition of appropriate modes of communication in (34 CFR § 361.5(b) (5)), to the extent necessary to meet the communication needs of individuals who are Deaf, Blind or Deaf-Blind. The Divisions policy addresses the (1) significance of such services, (2) the selection of service providers, (3) the scheduling and payment for services, and (4) an evaluation process for such services.

- (6) *Coordination of Personnel Development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*

The Individuals Disabilities Education Act provides renewed emphasis on the planning for service delivery and collaboration of the various divisions and programs designated to serve students and youth with disabilities.

The Division has an interagency agreement with the Division of Special Education, state Department of Education in providing administrative support for a coordinated, collaborative effort of service delivery. The Blind and Visually Impaired Services/Deaf and Hard of Hearing unit continues an agreement with the Tennessee School for the Blind and the Tennessee School for the Deaf. Networking of the two divisions relative to transition services has provided a means for coordinating and sharing information regarding personnel development under IDEA. There is ongoing communication between the two divisions and each division has responsibility for providing input into personnel development activities.

An interagency agreement was developed to fulfill the requirements of IDEA. The most recent version of this agreement was signed July 1, 2012. The purpose of this agreement is to identify and define the financial responsibility of each state agency for providing services under IDEA and to facilitate the provision and coordination of services for all children with disabilities. The following state agencies are participating in this agreement: Tennessee Department of Education; Tennessee Department of Children's Services; Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration; Bureau of TennCare; Tennessee Department of Health; Tennessee Department of Human Services; Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; and Tennessee Department of Correction.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

In 2013, Governor Bill Haslam signed an Employment First Executive Order. This Executive Order established the Employment First Taskforce. In 2014, the Employment First Taskforce signed and executed a Youth Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This agencies involved in the MOU are:

- Tennessee Department of Education
- Tennessee Department of Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation
- Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

The purpose of this MOU is to indicate how these agencies will work together to provide transition school to work services to students and youth with disabilities.

The Division continues to recognize the value of the involvement of its State Rehabilitation Council in personnel development activities. It is the policy of the Division to give the Council ongoing review and input on the development of issues associated with the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). The Council continues to be involved with CSPD issues associated with the recruitment and retention of staff, such as; counselor salaries and pay incentives for the successful attainment of counselors with a Master's degree in Rehabilitation and also training for existing staff to obtain a Master's degree in Rehabilitation.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

### **(j) Statewide Assessment**

- (1) Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the VR services needs of those:*
  - (A) with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;*
  - (B) individuals with disabilities who are minorities*
  - (C) individuals with disabilities who have not been served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;*
  - (D) individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system;*
  - (E) who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.*
- (2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs (CRPs within the state; and*
- (3) Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division), in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), completed a comprehensive assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of Tennesseans with disabilities in the summer of 2013 and is conducting needs assessments on a three-year cycle. The VR program is conducting a new Comprehensive Needs Assessment to be completed in the summer of 2016. As required in 34 CFR § 29, the information obtained from a number of sources was assessed and analyzed to determine the needs as stated above.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

### Methodology

Five surveys were developed, one for each category of participant. The surveys have some questions in common. The five surveys were administered in August 2013. Survey participants included vocational rehabilitation clients and/or their caregivers, staff, workforce investment system personnel, community resource partners, and vocational rehabilitation stakeholders. All five surveys were administered through an anonymous web-based process. In addition, five interviewers attempted to administer the client/caregiver survey to a beginning list of 1,000 (750 active and 250 closed) clients. In all, there were 907 completed surveys evaluated and analyzed for this Vocational Rehabilitation Needs Assessment. There were 6,291 e-mail requests sent and 616 calls made. These 6,907 contacts yielded a response rate of 13%. Earlier during this Needs Assessment, focus groups of VR staff and VR clients were conducted in six regions (1, 2, 5, 7, 8, and 9). These focus groups aided in the low response rate of the client/caregiver survey.

### Survey Overview

Five surveys were developed, one for each category of participant. The surveys have some questions in common. The five surveys were administered in August 2013. Survey participants included vocational rehabilitation clients and/or their caregivers, staff, workforce investment system personnel, community resource partners, and vocational rehabilitation stakeholders. All five surveys were administered through an anonymous web-based process. In addition, five interviewers attempted to administer the client/caregiver survey to a beginning list of 1,000 (750 active and 250 closed) clients.

The client/caregiver sample was obtained from active cases and case closures from October 2011 to March 2013. The list of 19,689 clients included active cases (Status 10 and 18), successful outcome closures (Status 26), and closures without a successful outcome (Status 28). Of the 15,965 active cases on the list, 5,521 provided an e-mail address for contact information. In addition, of the 3,724 closed cases on the list, 1,158 provided an e-mail address for contact information. Therefore, the client/caregiver survey link was sent to 6,679 participants. Of the 5,521 active case participants with an e-mail, 598 e-mails bounced back undeliverable. Therefore, 4,923 active Vocational Rehabilitation clients received the survey link. Of the 1,158 closed case participants with an e-mail, 617 e-mails bounced back undeliverable. Therefore, 541 closed case Vocational Rehabilitation clients received the survey link. Of the 541 total participants, 495 began the survey process and 469 completed the client/caregiver survey. The survey completion rate was 94.7%.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

So that customers without access to the Internet could also have an opportunity to provide their opinions, five interviewers contacted 1,000 (750 active and 250 closed) clients by phone. The 1,000 clients were chosen randomly from the customers without e-mail addresses. Of the 1,000 customers contacted by phone, there were 384 wrong numbers or disconnected numbers. Of the remaining 616, 151 were contacted and agreed to complete the client/caregiver survey. These 151 participants fully completed 146 surveys for a completion rate of 96.7%. Approximately 25% of the 1,000 clients called completed the client/caregiver survey. Combined, the web-based survey link and the telephone survey of clients' response rate totaled approximately 10%.

The staff survey link was sent by e-mail to 537 staff members and 45 supervisors for a total of 582 staff members. Of these 582 staff members, 123 started a staff survey and 106 or 86.2% completed the survey questions. Therefore, 21% of Vocational Rehabilitation Staff responded to the staff survey.

WIOA personnel were sent their survey link in 92 e-mails. However, 128 WIOA surveys were completed. Therefore, the survey link e-mail sent out by the Research and Planning Unit was shared with at least 36 other individuals. The completion rate for these 128 surveys was 91.4% for the 117 surveys completed. The response rate for the WIOA survey equaled 79%.

Community Resources Partners (CRPs) were sent 118 e-mails requesting respondents complete the CRP survey. There were 46 surveys started by the CRPs and 43 surveys finished. This is a completion rate of 93.5%. This places the return rate much lower at approximately 39%.

Vocational Rehabilitation stakeholders were sent 35 e-mails for the stakeholder survey link. Twenty-nine started the survey and 26 completed all questions on the survey. This is a survey completion rate of 89.7%. However, this particular survey's return rate was 83% much higher than were the others.

In all, there were 907 surveys completed, evaluated, and analyzed for the Vocational Rehabilitation Needs Assessment. There were 6,291 e-mail requests sent and 616 calls made. These 6,907 contacts yielded a response rate of 13%. Earlier during this Needs Assessment, focus groups of VR staff and VR clients were conducted in six regions (1, 2, 5, 7, 8, and 9). These focus groups aided in the low response rate of this particular survey. The five surveys shared several like items, but also differed on distinct issues for each group. From these five survey instruments, this Needs Assessment will attempt to identify the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities in Tennessee, to discover the unmet needs of minority groups (including the not served and the underserved) in Tennessee, and to recognize which population(s) of individuals with disabilities are those not served and/or the underserved in Tennessee.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

### Survey Results & Analysis

#### *Vocational Rehabilitation Stakeholders*

Overall, respondents (38%) are sometimes satisfied with the services VR clients receive. Twenty-four percent (24%) are satisfied and 21% are dissatisfied. Two respondents listed not applicable, two were very dissatisfied, and one person stated that they were very satisfied with the services VR clients receive. One stakeholder praised VR's improvements made in *"Working on developing relationships with future clients before they leave high school; actively participating in meaningful IEP transition meetings."*

According to survey results, 48% of stakeholders straddled the fence in their belief that VR Counselors fully understand how and why a client's disability affects their chances of employment. Twenty-four (24%) percent agree and 17% percent disagree that VR Counselors understand the impact a disability has on employment. Eleven (11) of the Stakeholders felt that employment opportunities were an unmet need of individuals with disabilities. One respondent shared that *"There seems to be a lack of creativity to find positions that are compatible with their disabilities."*

Slightly over one third of stakeholder respondents agree that VR client chances of getting a job increased because of training and services received through Vocational Rehabilitation. One third feel training and services sometimes assist in increased job probability for clients. In addition, 30% disagreed with the statement. Qualitatively, 18 stakeholder respondents felt that potential employers are looking for the following four types of skills from individuals with disabilities: 1) Entry level (55%), 2) Timeliness/Good Work Ethic (16%), 3) Behavior/Soft Skills (16%), and 4) Basic Computer Skills (11%). From comments on this survey, most employers seek "reliability, job pride, honesty, and friendliness."

Of the 29 stakeholder respondents, an overwhelming 72% do not feel that VR Counselors help secure employment for VR Clients. Fifty-five (55%) percent of respondents feel the majority of clients find jobs themselves. Only 10, 34.5% feel clients do not secure their own employment. Three people did not respond to the survey question.

Forty-one (41%) percent of responding stakeholders feel VR Counselors sometimes invite VR clients to be part of developing their vocational goals. Thirty-eight (38%) percent agree that VR Counselors involve clients in the development of their goals and 17% disagree, while one person chose to skip the question. The 17% that disagree may feel that clients are being judged by their behavioral choices. One respondent stated an unmet need as *"The effects of their disabilities are often confused with behavioral choices, making them often appear to be resistant to services."*

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Of those who responded, 55% feel that VR Counselors do inform their clients of the available jobs of interest that also match their skills. Twenty-one (21%) percent agree that counselors do make clients aware of possible jobs, while 17% disagree. Two people skipped this question. One Stakeholder suggested the *“need for job carving for some individuals on spectrum.”*

More stakeholders disagreed (31%) than agreed (24%) that VR Counselors are strong advocates for VR clients’ mental, physical, and vocational needs. However, the majority, 41%, are unsure if VR Counselors are strong advocates or not. One responder did not answer. The lack of communication was a constant theme in this survey. One respondent made the following comment concerning communication: *“Placing information on the VR web site and keeping it updated, be a highly visible collaborative partner with disability related organizations and efforts geared toward employment, and positive outreaches and advertising to the community.”*

#### *Community Resource Partners*

On average Tennessee’s Vocational Rehabilitation Community Resource Partners service more than 100 individuals with disabilities. Community Resource Partners qualitative comments state that the more clients are provided one-on-one interaction time with various jobs and receive personal individualized attention or job site assessments they are better able to provide or suggest a more suitable work environment and with greater success. In addition to interpreter services, Community Resource Partners also listed computers as a big need in their agency to accommodate people with disabilities. According to respondents, the most successful elements of Community Resource Partners soft skills training is individualized attention and job readiness. Community Resource Partners sees the underserved and the not served population to be those with severe disabilities, autism, deaf and hard of hearing, along with cognitive functions. Unmet needs of the not served population include counseling and guidance as well as communication and outreach. To serve these clients Community Resource Partners suggests developing better partnerships and changing eligibility to be more inclusive and flexible.

Community Resource Partners believes that potential employers are most interested in employees who have appropriate behavior, work ethic, and timeliness in respective job settings. Survey responses state the most beneficial agency partnerships for CRP have been other non-profits agencies. The majority of Community Resource Partners survey respondents are interested in documentation training. Many Community Resource Partners responders report constant policy and procedure changes in VR are confusing.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Community Resource Partners provided information about successful pieces to their assessment process and successful soft skills. The job readiness category garnered the most responses. For assessment one provider stated “Providing a concise report that includes realistic vocational options based on interests, aptitudes, transferrable skills, and labor market information” as the successful piece of their assessment process. Another provider stated *“Job Shadowing, Job Sampling, Working Interviews” were a successful soft skill teaching tool for clients.*

Community Resource Partners reported the unserved and underserved to be individuals with developmental disabilities (Autism Spectrum Disorder and Asperger’s), Veterans in category 3 or category 4, and individuals with felony charges and/or chronic or recent drug addictions. These unmet needs were reported by Community Resource Partners to be met by education and training 24% of the time. For instance, “employment specialist needs to help stabilize client’s job.” “They have the skills to GET job but have no skills to KEEP the job.” The barriers reported by minorities with disabilities were VR knowledge/awareness (20%) and language barriers (14%).

Community Resource Partners requested better training in job development and job placement. They praised the opening of Priority 2 category as a significant positive. In order to improve communication, they requested weekly or bi-weekly meetings with VR Counselors and Supported Employment staff to review caseloads.

#### *Workforce Investment Systems (WIS)*

On average Workforce Investment Systems service more than 100 individuals with disabilities.

Services that WIS felt were most helpful include job readiness, support services, and education. Computer hardware topped the list in most needed accommodations for people with disabilities. The majority of qualitative comments requested updated staff computers as well as updated computers for clients. WIS is also asking for laptops they can carry between sites and visits. The most helpful element of their assessment is the staff’s knowledgebase of the client, disability, and job market. Interviewing skills, communication, and job readiness were the number one soft skills WIS felt helped clients obtain and maintain employment. The suggestions for underserved or unserved clients included opening the priority categories, blind and visually impaired clients, along with clients who have autism. Suggested ways to reach this group include: expand outreach, improve resources, and communication. Stated barriers to reaching this group include: cultural competence and educating VR staff and employers on various barriers. Respondents also suggested building the awareness of VR services among the common population, including schools, business, and VR partners.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Five respondents stated that they do not have any clients with disabilities. Another 5 stated they provide services to 1-9 persons with disabilities. Nine respondents service 10-39 clients while 40-59 clients are seen by at least 12 of the Workforce Investment Systems who responded to the survey. Three (8.6%) respondents provide client services to approximately 60-79 clients. Eleven of the 128 WIS see at least 80-99 persons with disabilities while the majority, 56.3%, of survey respondents provides supportive services to over 100 persons with disabilities.

In addition to non-VR clients, the majority, 54.7%, of surveyed Workforce Investment Systems provide services for more than 100 Vocational Rehabilitation clients. Five respondents stated that they do not have any VR clients. Seven stated they provide services to 1-9 Vocational Rehabilitation clients. Ten respondents service 10-39 clients while 40-59 clients are seen by at least nine of the Workforce Investment Systems who responded to the survey. Fifteen (11.7%) respondents provide client services to approximately 60-79 clients, while only 10 of the 128 WIS see at least 80-99 Vocational Rehabilitation clients.

Of the services available through WIS, Job Development (50%), Job Search (44%), On-the-Job Training (35%), and Assessments (32%) are the most successful components in obtaining and maintaining employment for individuals with disabilities.

#### *Vocational Rehabilitation Staff*

VR Staff would like more training in New Counselor Training, Job Development, Case Management, and Disabilities. Many feel they are adequately aware of the job market but would like a more thorough understanding of connecting their clients with the right employment match based on need and client skills. From focus groups conducted in February, staff feel they would do a much better job if they are able to build relationships with businesses in their surrounding areas. Unserved clients are those who are elderly, economically unqualified, those with learning disorders, and high school students, ranked as the most mentioned unserved group. The most underserved group included middle aged and working age people, and those with less severe and more severe disabilities (autism and learning disabilities were listed). Support services such as technology access and job training, were listed as unmet needs. Barriers to reaching out to the unserved and underserved include cultural competence in understanding various cultures and disabilities on the part of employers and some staff. Job readiness and basic computer skills topped the list in expected training and skills most potential employers are looking for from VR clients. VR staff feel that the DHS Vocational Rehabilitation program is most successful in providing assistance to clients, conducting assessments and making changes to serve them more effectively.

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### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Forty-nine (49%) percent of VR staff agrees that the current accommodations their clients receive meet their employment needs. Four people did not respond.

Forty-six (46%) percent of VR staff agrees that the job training their clients received or are still receiving adequately prepares them for employment. Five people did not respond.

Fifty-four (54%) percent of VR staff agrees that they are well informed and understand how and why clients' disabilities impact their chances of getting or keeping a job. Four people did not respond.

Sixty-one (61%) percent of VR staff stated yes, they often help clients obtain jobs. Eighteen people did not respond.

Seventy (70%) percent of VR staff respondents stated, no, the majority of their clients do not find jobs themselves. Ten people did not respond.

Eighty-one (81%) percent of VR staff respondents agree that they do invite clients to participate in developing vocational goals and they are involved in selecting the services of the preferred providers. Staff feels clients are unaware of the available providers, there are not enough providers, and some clients do not like to be told their ideas or plans for a career will not be supported by VR. Clients feel VR should support any career choice or path they decide.

Twenty-five (25%) percent of respondents agreed that on average, clients use VR services approximately 3 times to obtain employment. Fourteen staff did not respond.

Thirty-nine (39%) percent of respondents sometimes agree that the VR assessment process correctly identifies clients' strengths and their physical, mental and emotional needs. Fourteen people did not respond.

Thirty-six (36%) percent of responding VR staff stated that placement agencies are the most effective method or practice that often leads to the best employment outcomes for their clients. Non-profit agencies were the second most helpful, followed by family and friends.

Two-thirds of responding VR staff feel they are adequately informed of the developing labor market and how to better advise their clients in developing skill sets that will be in demand.

At the time of the survey, 71% of VR staff stated that their clients were not employed. Only 10 of the 122 responded that their clients were currently employed.



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# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Of the 34 responding VR Staff, 9 agreed that clients are employed 1-3 months on average, followed by 7 who stated 1-2 years, and another 7 stated 6-12 months. The time span varied from 3 months to more than 2 years.

Of the 92 VR staff who responded, 48 stated that few clients have jobs when they leave the VR program. Forty-two (42%) stated that most clients have jobs and only 2 stated none of their clients have jobs when they leave the program.

Most clients, 60-79%, currently receive checks from the government such as SSI or SSDI, according to 30% of the VR Staff respondents. Another 28% stated that 80-90% of their clients receive SSI or SSDI.

Half of the staff who responded have Master's degrees. Another fourth have a Bachelor's degree. Twenty-six people skipped this question. Most respondents are between the age of 45-64 years of age.

### VR Client/Caregivers

Fifty-nine (59%) percent of the respondents are satisfied with the services they received or are still receiving from VR. However there were suggestions regarding education and training. VR clients repeatedly want education expenses paid for college and perhaps graduate level courses. VR clients continue to be thoroughly uninformed of the policy, procedures, and stipulations for funding school or training programs. One responded stated, *"Explaining how the money is dispersed would be helpful in the beginning of the person's acceptance into the program and how it works with the available financial aid the client receives."* Other suggestions for improvement include basic computer skills training, additional options for job training, and improved and increased employment prospects. Clients voiced concern about too many jobs being geared towards janitorial, cooking, and cleaning.

Over 50% agree that the job training they received or are still receiving prepares them for employment.

Sixty-three (63%) percent of surveyed Clients agree that their counselor understands how and why their disability impacts their chances of getting or keeping a job.

Fifty-three (53%) percent of respondents agree that their chances of getting a job increased because of VR training and services. Only 185 (29%) disagreed with this statement. The remaining 94 selected "sometimes". Twenty-four respondents elected to skip this question.

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# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Of the 639 who responded, only 12% stated that their counselor helped them secure a job. Forty-four (44%) percent selected “N/A” and the remaining 43% did not feel counselors helped them secure employment.

Twenty-three (23%) percent of responding clients stated that they found their own job, while 27% stated they did not find their job on their own and 50% selected N/A meaning they currently did not have or job or they have never had a job while working with VR.

Fifty-five (55%) percent of VR clients who responded agreed that their counselor invites them to be a part of developing their vocational goals and involved in selecting services and training. Seventeen (17%) percent of those who responded selected ‘sometimes’ and another 28% state that they disagree or strongly disagree that the counselor invites them to participate in the development of goal setting and training.

The majority of respondents, 43%, stated that their counselor informs them of available jobs of interest and skill match. Thirty-eight (38%) percent disagreed with this statement. Eighteen (18%) percent felt counselors sometimes informed them and sometimes did not inform them of suitable jobs.

Only 1/8 of the responding VR clients had a job when they left the VR program. Thirty-two percent (32%) stated they did not have a job when leaving the program.

Over half (55%) of the VR client’s responding to the survey stated they have not used VR services to secure employment. More than 20% used VR services at least once to secure employment. The remaining respondents, 112, secured employment via VR services 2-5 times.

Only 18% of those who received placement were satisfied with their current job situation. Eight percent are unsatisfied and 40 of the 631 responding were on the fence of satisfied and not satisfied. They selected “sometimes”.

Fifty-seven (57%) percent of respondents agree that their counselor is a strong advocate for their mental, emotional, and vocational needs. Twenty-eight (28%) percent disagree, 14% sometimes feel the counselors are strong advocates. The remaining 4% of the 646 skipped this question.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

### **(k) Annual Estimates**

- (1) The number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services*
- (2) The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:*
  - (A) The VR Program*
  - (B) The Supported Employment Program; and*
  - (C) Each priority category, if under an order of selection.*
- (2) The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and*
- (3) The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order selection*

As of Sept 30, 2015, 8,687 individuals in the state are eligible for services under an IPE. Of this number and in compliance with our Order of Selection, 7,658 are receiving services provided with Title I, Part B funds and 1,029 are receiving services provided with Title VI, Part B funds and with Title I, Part B funds.

For Federal Fiscal Year 2016, it is projected that there will be 5,950 new applicants and that 13,666 individuals in the state will be eligible for services under an IPE. Of this number, 12,966 will receive services under an IPE provided with Title I, Part B funds and 700 will receive services under an IPE provided with Title VI, Part B funds and with Title I, Part B funds. It is estimated that the number of individuals to be served under Title I, Part B and Title VI, Part B under an IPE during Federal Fiscal Year 2016 under each priority category within our Order of Selection will be:

Priority Category	Order of Selection
Priority Category 1	9,658 (Includes Title VI, Part B)
Priority Category 2	4,008
Priority Category 3	0
Priority Category 4	0
Total	13,666



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Note: Estimates for eligible individuals and those who will be provided services under the Order of Selection in Federal Fiscal Year 2016 is based on current trends.

It is estimated that the cost of Title I, Part B and Title VI, Part B services for the projected 13,666 individuals who will be eligible for services under an IPE will be approximately \$21,827,000 and that the service cost for each priority category within the Order of Selection for the individuals served will be:

Priority Category	Estimated Cost
Priority Category 1	\$15,417,725
	(Includes Title VI, Part B)
Priority Category 2	6,409,275
Priority Category 3	0
Priority Category 4	0
Total	\$21,827,000

Note: Estimated cost for services is based on the total available funding approved by the state's Department of Finance and Administration for our Delegated Purchase Authority.

Category	Title 1 or Title VI	Estimated Funds	Estimated number to be served under IPE	Average and Total Cost of Services
<b>1 and 2</b>		\$21,827,000	13,666	\$1,597/per case
<b>1</b>	Title VI included		9,658	\$15,417,725
<b>2</b>			4,008	\$ 6,409,275
<b>3</b>			0	0
<b>4</b>			0	0
<b>Total</b>			13,666	\$21,827,000

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

### **(I) State Goals and Priorities**

- (1) Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.*
- (2) Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.*
- (3) Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:*
  - (A) The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;*
  - (B) The State's under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and*
  - (C) Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.*

The goals and priorities for 2017 are:

#### **Goal 1. Continue Increasing Successful Employment Outcomes**

##### *Objective 1.1:*

- A. Increase Successful Employment Outcomes by 2% or more annually over the next 4 years. The opportunity exists to reinvigorate historical referral sources. This effort will include development of marketing initiatives for use in local areas for community outreach as well as joint efforts for partners listed below but not limited to:
  - a. All agencies as required in the Combined State Plan
  - b. Tennessee's Department of Labor and Workforce Development
  - c. Department of Economic and Community Development
  - d. Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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- e. Department of Children's Services and Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- f. Chambers of Commerce
- g. TennesseeWorks Partnership
- h. TennCare

The Division will develop strategies for increasing referrals of Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) through local education agencies. Special focus will include the identification of any underserved population at the regional level.

- b. Action Steps to establish a stronger focus on employment related activities include:
  - a. Fully staff the Agency
  - b. Increase visibility and engagement of the Agency's Business Services Unit for regional and statewide activities;
  - c. Building a comprehensive network of employment resources across the state;
  - d. Implementing services to employers promoting the value of the Division and the hiring of people with disabilities;
  - e. Maintain the current Community Rehabilitation Provider monitoring process to ensure effectiveness and efficiency;
  - f. Develop/disseminate surveys to determine adequate training needs of service providers (new and seasoned staff)
  - g. Maintain the monitoring and expansion of contracts related to Business Initiatives (ex. CLEE)
  - h. Continue to work collaboratively with and provide greater technical assistance to the Workforce Investment System. The program will continue to have counselors co-located in each of the State's Local Workforce Investment Areas' (LWIA) comprehensive career centers and to provide itinerant counselors to serve all satellite career centers.



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### *Objective 1.2:*

The Program will continue to monitor expenditures and available resources to determine sufficiency of releasing and/or opening Categories 3 and 4.

### Goal 2. Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness in Client Services Delivery System

- A. Throughout the SFY, Vocational Rehabilitation will achieve a monthly timeliness rating of 92% for the determination of eligibility with the inclusion of extension agreements per policy. Determination of eligibility within 60 days.
- B. Throughout the SFY, Vocational Rehabilitation will develop the Individualized Plan for Employment within 90 days unless there is an agreed upon extension between the client and counselor. A timeliness rating of 90%.
- C. Meet with core partners to develop goals around the new federal standards and indicators regarding wages

### *Objective 2.2:*

Research prevailing wages for various industries

### *Objective 2.3:*

- Research, develop, and implement strategies to increase the awareness and accessibility of client satisfaction surveys
- Achieving an 80% or higher satisfaction rating for the vocational rehabilitation program as reported by the consumer satisfaction survey program for successful outcome closures
- Continue to increase staff knowledge in rehabilitation practices through on-going training.

### *Objective 2.4:*

Ensure access to VR documents, materials and training for clients, citizens, and staff:

1. The Program will ensure that all documents and materials are available in alternate formats.

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2. The Program will ensure that timely requests are made when qualified interpreters are needed or requested
3. The Program will create VR marketing materials to accommodate individuals with sensory disabilities
4. The Program will research, develop, and implement a marketing plan to educate the community about VR services.
5. Meet with Disability Pathfinder to identify needs and engage diverse populations

#### **(m) Order of Selection: Describe**

- (1) *The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services.*
- (2) *The justification for the order.*
- (3) *The service and outcome goals.*
- (4) *The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.*
- (5) *How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.*
- (6) *If the designated State Unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.*

#### *Justification for order of selection*

The Division's Order of Selection is developed in accordance with 34 CFR § 361.36 of the final regulations. The Order of Selection has four priority categories as defined below in this section.

On August 1, 2001, the Division implemented an Order of Selection due to funding limitations that would not allow the Division to provide services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to all eligible individuals. Only Priority Category 1 cases (eligible individuals who have the most significant disabilities) were served until 2009.

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From 2009 until October 2012 there were numerous releases of Priority Category 2 and 3 cases. Beginning October 1, 2012, the Division opened Priority Category 2 for services. The Division is now serving all Priority Category 1 and 2 cases. Those Priority Category 3 cases that were on the waiting list were released for services on October 1, 2013.

The Division's funds and resources remain inadequate to serve individuals in all four priority categories. The Division expects to have approximately \$21,000,000 from the federal grant and state appropriations to spend for assessments for an estimated 5,958 new cases and planned services for approximately 13,666 existing and new cases. Approximately half of this amount must be allocated for pre-employment transition services.

The Division expects to serve 13,666 existing and new Priority Category 1 and 2 cases in 2016. Of this number, the Division expects to provide services for 9,658 Priority Category 1 cases and 4,008 Priority Category 2 cases.

The Division will monitor staffing needs to determine if there is sufficient manpower to schedule releases of Priority Category 3 and 4 cases for services or open all Priority Category 3 cases for services. Therefore, continuation of the Order of Selection mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, to determine which eligible individuals will be served under an IPE is still warranted due to staffing deficiencies.

The Division monitors services and expenditures on a continuous basis, allowing the Division to manage available funds and staff to assure sustainability of services for cases placed in an open priority category and receiving services under an IPE. Additionally, adequate funds will continue to be conserved and staffing deficiencies monitored to provide assessment services for all applicants expected to apply throughout the year to determine eligibility and to provide services for those eligible individuals in an open priority category within the Order of Selection.

### *Description of Priority categories*

PRIORITY CATEGORY I -- Eligible individuals who have the most significant disabilities

PRIORITY CATEGORY II -- Eligible individuals who have significant disabilities

PRIORITY CATEGORY III -- Eligible individuals who do not have significant disabilities and whose vocational rehabilitation is expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services

PRIORITY CATEGORY IV -- Eligible individuals who do not have a significant disability that cannot be classified into a higher priority category



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### *Definitions*

"Most Significant Disability" means the individual meets the criteria for having a significant disability but has a physical or mental impairment that seriously limits two or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome.

"Significant Disability" means the individual meets the three following criteria:

1. The individual has a severe physical, sensory or mental impairment which seriously limits at least one functional capacity (such as visual/mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and
2. The individual has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, deaf /blind, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegic, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, and end-stage renal disease; or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility, and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation; and
3. The individual's vocational rehabilitation program can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

"Non-Significant Disability" means the individual does not meet the criteria for significant disability or the criteria for most significant disability.

"Multiple Vocational Rehabilitation Services" mean two or more major vocational rehabilitation services, i.e. physical or mental restoration, training, counseling, guidance and placement. Excluded are support services such as transportation, maintenance, and the routine counseling and guidance that should take place in every case.

"Extended Period of Time" means 6 months from the date services begin until the employment objective is achieved.

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*Service and outcome goals and the time within which the goals will be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order*

The Order of Selection priority categories outcome and service goals and time frames are as follows:

1. PRIORITY CATEGORY I -- Eligible individuals who have the most significant disabilities
  - A. Outcome and Service Goal: Expect to determine eligibility for 4,058 new individuals in this priority category; serve 9,658; and close 1,680 successfully employed.
  - B. Goal will be achieved by September 30, 2016.
2. PRIORITY CATEGORY II -- Eligible individuals who have significant disabilities
  - A. Outcome and Service Goal: Expect to determine eligibility for 1,790 new individuals in this priority category; serve 4,008; and close 612 successfully employed.
  - B. Goal will be achieved by September 30, 2016.
3. PRIORITY CATEGORY III -- Eligible individuals who do not have significant disabilities and whose vocational rehabilitation is expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services
  - A. Outcome and Service Goal: Expect to determine eligibility for 117 new individuals in this priority category and have 229 on the waiting list.
  - B. Goal will be achieved by September 30, 2016.
4. PRIORITY CATEGORY IV -- Eligible individuals who do not have a significant disability that cannot be classified into a higher priority category
  - A. Outcome and Service Goal: Expect to determine eligibility for 3 new individuals in this priority category and have 5 on the waiting list.
  - B. Goal will be achieved by September 30, 2016.

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Cases	Estimated # of individuals to be served	Estimated # of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services	Estimated # of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services	Goal Achievement Date	Cost of services
New	5,968				\$1,492,000
PC 1	9858	1680		Sept. 30, 2016	\$15,417,725
PC 2	4,008	612		Sept. 30, 2016	\$6,409,275
PC 3	117 eligibility and PC determination only	0		Sept. 30, 2016	\$29,250 Assessments
PC 4	5 eligibility and PC determination only	0		Sept. 30, 2015	\$1,250 Assessments

How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities

The Division is currently serving Priority Category 1 and 2 cases. If the Division cannot continue to serve all Priority Category 1 and 2 cases, then Priority Category 1 cases will continue to be served and services for Priority Category 2 cases will be provided based on the date of application for services. If the Division cannot continue to serve all Priority Category 1 cases, then services will be provided based on the date of application for services.

The Division plans continue to study its resources to determine if Priority 3 can be opened for services. If Priority 3 is opened and the Division cannot continue to serve all Priority 3 cases then services will be provided based on the date of application for services.

Individuals who are determined to be in a closed priority category are referred to other appropriate agencies for services.

#### **(n) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds**

- (1) *Specify the state's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.*
- (2) *Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:*
  - (A) *The provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years, and*
  - (B) *How the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.*



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The Division continues to provide supported employment services to eligible clients with the most significant disabilities who have been determined to require on-going support (extended) services in order to maintain employment.

It is the continued goal of the Division to provide quality supported employment services which are delivered in an effective, efficient and timely manner. Supported employment services are provided through Letters of Agreement with community rehabilitation providers, and in cooperation with the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. The community rehabilitation providers must assure that on-going support (extended) services will be provided prior to the implementation of supported employment services or will be developed as natural supports during training. The Division has an excellent supported employment program along with training and support activities to ensure the continued provision of quality supported employment services. These programs are ongoing and are not subject to a specific timeline. Prime examples of these ongoing activities are:

1. Through contract with the University of Tennessee, Center for Literacy, Education and Employment (CLEE), the Division funds three supported employment consultants who are charged with the responsibility of working with our many supported employment community rehabilitation providers in providing training and technical assistance to the staff who provide services to our clients. These same consultants also work with the Division staff on an as needed basis to provide technical assistance.
2. The Division has Program Specialists in the three grand regions of the state who assist in the monitoring of and consultation to the community rehabilitation providers to ensure appropriate services are being provided to our clients.
3. The Division plans to continue the funding of the UT CLEE SE consultants activities as well as continue the provision of in-house monitoring of the services provided to the Division's clients by the SE community rehabilitation providers.

The Division will continue to seek community rehabilitation providers to provide supported employment services to under-served disability groups with the most significant disabilities who, because of their disability, have not been able to enter traditional competitive employment or whose employment is intermittent or interrupted due to a most significant disability.

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The Division expects to continue increasing employment opportunities for those individuals eligible for supported employment with co-occurring disorders of mental illness, and alcohol and drug abuse by expanding more effective partnerships with mental health entities that work with this population and by implementing improved services. The Division has a Central Office field liaison who works with mental health entities and the Division's staff statewide in developing such partnerships where needed and who provides training and technical assistance to the mental health community rehabilitation providers and our staff.

The Division has a Central Office field liaison who works with service providers statewide that provides supported employment and extended services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to assist with technical assistance and staff training.

The Division expects to serve in excess of 1300 clients through the supported employment program during the Fiscal Year 2017. The Division has consistently closed around 22% of the supported employment clients in successful employment. This would mean around 286 successful outcomes for FY2017.

The Division is establishing service codes and defining the extended employment services that will be provided for up to 4 years for youth with disabilities. The Community Rehabilitation Providers have been notified of these services that can be provided for the first time.

In 2013, Governor Bill Haslam signed an Employment First Executive Order. This Executive Order established the Employment First Taskforce. In 2014, the Employment First Taskforce sign and executed an Youth Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This agencies involved in the MOU are:

- Tennessee Department of Education
- Tennessee Department of Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation
- Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

This MOU will assist the Division in leveraging other public funds to increase resources for extended services and extended employment.

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**(o) State's Strategies.** *Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the vocational rehabilitation and the supported employment programs. See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA):*

- (1) Describe the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.*
- (2) Identify how a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.*
- (3) Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR Program.*
- (4) The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment and pre-employment transition services).*
- (5) If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.*
- (6) Describe strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.*
- (7) Describe strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.*
- (8) Describe how the agency's strategies will be used to:*
  - (A) Achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;*
  - (B) Support innovation and expansion activities; and*
  - (C) Overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.*



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Funds will be utilized in Fiscal Year 2017 for addressing the following priorities that continue to be identified in our needs assessment as they relate to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including those who need supported employment services; individuals with disabilities who are minorities; individuals with disabilities who have been un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; and individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system and personnel assisting those individuals through the components of the system: Education and Training; Employment Opportunities; Information; Support Services; and Counseling and Guidance.

In addition, as the Division continues to serve Priority Category 1 and 2 cases, more individuals with significant disabilities are able to access vocational rehabilitation services. The Division continues to monitor the budget and the staff capacity in order to determine the ability to serve Priority 3 and 4 cases. It is anticipated this activity will lead to improvement in the number of individuals with disabilities reaching successful rehabilitation outcome statuses by:

1. Continuing the practice of ensuring the availability of appropriate training activities and resources to meet the individualized needs of clients by seeking out and developing partnerships with other private and public entities to provide specialized education and training activities, to include those that can be provided through self-employment, on-the-job-training by employers, and customized employment.
2. Continuing the development and expansion of statewide employer relationships that focus on inclusion of employees with disabilities in the workforce and the value of hiring people with disabilities. The Division will continue its expansion of our activities with Employment Groups across the state and in the local areas with new programs, such as Walgreens REDI and Project Search.
3. Continuing to support expansion of supported employment services by actively seeking out, training, and monitoring community rehabilitation providers; especially in the more rural areas, that are willing to provide supported employment services to vocational rehabilitation clients with the most significant disabilities; and by fostering partnerships with DIDD and the ARCs of Tennessee to implement employment network projects with community rehabilitation providers. The Division is striving to have shared vendors with DIDD in order to access services for shared clients. The Division is expanding participation in the Individual Placement Model of Supported Employment (IPS) statewide.

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4. Continue to increase employment opportunities for clients through development, training, and monitoring of community rehabilitation providers providing job coach pools and employment services.
5. Development of the Business Services Unit will increase targeted marketing and education services to employers; and the provision of additional technical support and expertise to Division staff, clients, and employers in the areas of ongoing and emerging disability issues, and supported employment issues.
6. Continuing to support expansion of Transition School-to-Work services by continuing to work with Local Education Agencies (LEA's) in the maintenance of existing partnerships and the creation of additional partnerships to provide vocational rehabilitation services targeted specifically to that LEA's school system. Continuing to work with and educate school personnel on the mission and scope of the Division in order to maximize services from both entities to better serve our mutual clientele to include appropriate qualified interpreters/accommodations for students that are in LEA/School to Work programs. The newly hired Transition School to Work Director will manage this process.
7. Continuing improvement in the service delivery of the Division's 17 community rehabilitation centers and the comprehensive rehabilitation center at Smyrna geared directly toward providing services leading to successful employment of individuals with the most significant disabilities. Pursue the development of additional service delivery entities in metropolitan and rural markets for services including vocational evaluation, personal and work adjustment, job development, job placement, and job coaching. The 17 Community rehabilitation centers are focusing on expansion of the job readiness programs and collaboration with local area businesses. The Smyrna TRC is expanding training programs through partnerships with Tennessee Department of Transportation, Gaylord Opryland, and Walgreens.
8. Continuing support of vocational rehabilitation counselor development by providing opportunities for vocational rehabilitation counselors to obtain Masters Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling. The Division will pursue all available RSA slots for master's level training available to the Division through outreach and research. The Division will continue utilization of recruiter staff for recruiting vocational rehabilitation counselors who have a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Finally, the Division will continue financial support of counselors seeking master's degrees.

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9. Developing and implementing a comprehensive staff development program based on core competencies for all VR Staff. Utilize partnerships through the university programs. There is an Education Development Plan being developed for all staff in order to reinforce and encourage the Division's goals and priorities.
10. Continuing to implement a marketing/outreach plan that targets and reaches un-served or underserved populations to include all minorities, such as Spanish-speaking clients and clients with traumatic brain injury, autism, deaf-blindness, and mental illness. The marketing efforts will target individuals with the most significant disabilities who are seeking employment.
11. Continuing to support the Workforce Investment System by continuing to co-locate vocational rehabilitation counselors in each of the major Workforce Investment Act Service delivery area career centers and ensuring that all career center satellites also have vocational rehabilitation counselors assigned to visit their centers on a regular basis to work with individuals with disabilities that visit each center.
12. Providing cross training to the career center staff in regard to meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities. Continue to provide consultation on career center accessibility and accommodation needs in regard to the accessibility needs in the building(s), and accommodations in terms of appropriate technology needed to serve individuals with the disabilities. Continue to partner with the American Job Centers (AJCs) in employment initiatives such as the summer youth employment project and the DEI grant
13. Continuing to support the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program and use of other Social Security work incentives that benefit clients by continuing contract with the Benefits to Work Company. This company provides Social Security benefits counseling to clients before and after the Individualized Plan for Employment process. Currently the Division contracts with Benefits to Work to provide outreach to communities on how working affects Social Security Benefits, work incentives, and benefits planning. The agency will also continue to promote the most effective use of Ticket to Work Employment Network programs for the Division and our partners.
14. Continuing training for vocational rehabilitation staff on how effective rehabilitation technology options lead to successful employment outcomes. Staff at the Technology centers meeting quarterly with staff to provide training on services.
15. Continuing support of the State Rehabilitation Council. Council members will be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending Council meetings and performing Council duties (including child care, - personal assistance services and qualified interpreters).



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16. Continuing support of the Statewide Independent Living Council. Council members will be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending Council meetings and performing Council duties (including child care, personal assistance services and qualified interpreters).
17. Continuing to submit to the Commissioner an annual report of how funds are utilized relative to innovation and expansion activities.
18. Continuing to provide a coordinated, comprehensive and statewide assistive technology delivery system through a network of contracted assistive technology centers. Each of these five centers, strategically located in Memphis, Jackson, Nashville, Chattanooga and Knoxville ensure access to clients from all 95 counties in Tennessee regardless of location. The centers diverse staff includes: Rehabilitation Engineers; Speech and Language Pathologists; Assistive Technologists; Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Therapists and other Professionals who provide clients with evaluation, training, device fabrication and follow up services. By providing clients with access to this highly trained and skilled resource, and by purchasing the required devices, clients have the tools that they need throughout their rehabilitation program to assist them in realizing their IPE goals.
19. Continue implementation of the electronic case management system (TRIMS) utilizing input from agency staff and vendors to enhance the Division's technological infrastructure and client service capabilities.
20. Continue partnerships with the three federal grants that target employment of persons with disabilities. Those grants are Tennessee Works, Employment First, and DEI. Tennessee is one of three states in the country that are receiving all three grants.
21. Revise the self-employment process to streamline the experience for clients seeking the self-employment option. Research other state VR self-employment policies for efficient, consumer oriented strategies; and include successful business owners in the process to produce a successful program that will help individuals with disabilities become successful entrepreneurs.

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### ***(p) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals. Describe:***

- (1) An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:*
  - (A) Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.*
  - (B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.*
- (2) An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:*
  - (A) Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.*
  - (B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.*
- (3) The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.*
- (4) How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.*

The goals and priorities are based on the comprehensive statewide assessment, on requirements related to the performance standards and indicators, and other state agency data on the information about the state agency. (See section 101(a)(15)(C) of the Act.) This attachment should be updated when there are material changes in the information that require the description to be amended.

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.
2. Identify if the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, jointly reviewed the goals and priorities and jointly agreed to any revisions.
3. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
4. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

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- A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
- B. The performance of the state on standards and indicators; and
- C. Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

The goals and priorities of the Division of Rehabilitation Services for Fiscal Year 2012, as developed and agreed to by the Division of Rehabilitation Services staff and the State Rehabilitation Council, are focused around the Division's strategic plan.

The goals and priorities for 2015 are:

#### Goal 1. Continue Increasing Successful Employment Outcomes

##### Objective 1.1:

1. Increase Successful Employment Outcomes by 10% or more over Federal Fiscal Year 2014. The opportunity exists to reinvigorate historical referral sources. This effort will include development of marketing initiatives for use in local areas for community outreach as well as joint efforts with the:
  - a. Workforce Investment System
  - b. Tennessee's Department of Labor and Workforce Development
  - c. Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development
  - d. Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
  - e. Tennessee Department of Children's Services and Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services



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The Division will develop strategies for increasing referrals of transition school to work clients through local education agencies. Special focus will include the identification of any underserved population at the regional level.

**ACHIEVEMENT:** In Federal Fiscal Year the Program had 2358 successful employment outcomes. This is a 9% increase over FY2014's successful employment outcomes of 2159. The VR Program continued focused collaborative efforts with numerous state agencies, in addition to collaboration with Universities across the state. In FFY 2015 Transition School to Work contracts were increased.

2. Action Steps to establish a stronger focus on employment related activities include:
  - a. Staffing the Agency's Business Services Unit for regional and statewide activities;
  - b. Building a comprehensive network of employment resources across the state;
  - c. Implementing services to employers promoting the value of the Division and the hiring of people with disabilities;
  - d. Continuing the current Community Rehabilitation Provider monitoring process to ensure effectiveness and efficiency;
  - e. Continue to work collaboratively with and provide greater technical assistance to the Workforce Investment System. The Division will continue to have counselors co-located in each of the State's Local Workforce Investment Areas' comprehensive career centers and to provide itinerant counselors to serve all satellite career centers.

**ACHIEVEMENT:** In FFY2015, the VR Program met with the Business Services Coordinator from the VR Program in Alabama to discuss strategies on expansion of the Business Services Unit in Tennessee. The Statewide Business Services Consultant worked with over 130 businesses statewide in FFY2015. The program offered new services to businesses, such as assistance with Section 503 compliance. The Department of Human Services continues to provide monitoring of the CRPs throughout the state.

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### Objective 1.2:

The Division will continue to monitor expenditures and available funding to determine if there is sufficient funding to release Category 3 and 4.

### Goal 2. Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness in Client Services Delivery System

#### Objective 2.1:

Meet or exceed the Federal rehabilitation success rate of 55.8% for FY 2014 (Success rate is determined by the number of Status 26 rehabilitated case closures divided by the number of Status 26 plus the number of Status 28 non-rehabilitated Case closures).The division is focusing on the Employment Needs Assessment Process in order to write better Individualized Employment Plans. This effort will increase the number of successful closures and decrease the number of unsuccessful closures.

#### Objective 2.2:

Meet or exceed the Federal ratio of the average hourly wage of individuals who achieved competitive employment to the average hourly wage of all employed individuals in the State of 0.520.Fifty-two percent of closures should be working at wages of \$10-\$11 per hour.

**ACHIEVEMENT:** The VR Program did not meet this goal. The ratio has consistently been 0.49, meaning Forty-nine percent of the successful closures were work at wages of \$10-\$11 per hour.

#### Objective 2.3:

Ensure adherence to quality services leading to employment and quality case management practices by:

1. Achieving an 80%or higher satisfaction rating for the vocational rehabilitation program as reported by the consumer satisfaction survey program for successful outcome closures.
2. Continuing with improvements to the Division's electronic case management system (Tennessee Rehabilitation Information and Management System, TRIMS) to enhance efficiency and accuracy.
3. Training- Continue to increase staff knowledge through continuous training.

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**ACHIEVEMENT:** The Program continues to make improvements the TRIMS system that will increase efficiency and effectiveness for the staff

Objective 2.4:

Ensure access to VR documents, materials and training for clients and staff:

1. The Division will ensure that all documents and materials are available in alternate formats, as needed and requested.

**ACHIEVEMENT:** The Division always ensures that materials are available in alternate formats. This information is always made available.

2. The Division will ensure that timely requests are made when qualified interpreters are needed or requested.

**ACHIEVEMENT:** The Division makes requests for interpreters as soon as possible.

3. Video ASL for the Deaf

**ACHIEVEMENT:** The Division continues to research how to best achieve this goal.

**(q) Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services. Include the following:**

- (1) *The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.*
- (2) *The timing of transition to extended services.*

The Division continues to provide supported employment services to eligible clients with the most significant disabilities who have been determined to require supported employment services, in accordance with 34 CFR § 361 and 363, in order to obtain and maintain employment.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

In January 2015, the Division introduced a new Supported Employment Letter of Agreement with milestone payments. The new fees incentivized the CRPs to focus their efforts on quality outcomes such as increased number of work hours and wages for VR clients in the Supported Employment program. The new LOA resulted in the CRPs directing their recruitment efforts to increase staff capacity. In Tennessee, a CRP must maintain a minimum of 3 staff to provide Supported Employment services. The lead Employment Specialist must meet the minimum requirement of a bachelors or associates degree with experience. Additionally, the Employment Specialist must have completed a training certificate from a recognized employment training program such as the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE). A CESP certification as accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies would fulfill the training requirement. It is anticipated that by January 2016, CRPs will have 100% compliance in regard to the Division's qualification requirements for SE providers. In October 2014, the Division initiated the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model. In FY 2015, the Division spent approximately \$2 million dollars in Supported Employment services. The Division will continue supplemental funding using VR Services Program funds to meet additional and needed demand.

It is the continued goal of the Division to provide quality supported employment services which are delivered in an effective, efficient and timely manner. Supported employment services are provided through Letters of Agreement with community rehabilitation providers and in cooperation with both the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. The community rehabilitation providers must assure that on-going support services will be available prior to the provision of supported employment services or will be developed as natural supports during training.

The Division coordinates with other state agencies and the community rehabilitation providers to transition clients receiving supported employment services to extended services. An individual is moved to extended services when the client has reached a point where he/she has achieved maximum performance on the job; has achieved minimum necessary supports on the job; the job is not in jeopardy of ending; and individual is maintaining work performance which is acceptable to employer and client. The Tennessee Employment Consortium, an independent association of community rehabilitation providers developed jointly by the Division, the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, continues to study transitioning from services provided by the Division to services provided by the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to develop best practices for transition of services. The Division is working with the University of Tennessee, Center for Literacy, Education and Employment to develop training for CRPs on how to develop natural supports to address extended services where funding is not available from another Agency.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Division will continue to contract for services from the University of Tennessee's Center for Literacy, Education and Employment (CLEE). These programs will provide continuing training to the Division's staff and contracted community rehabilitation providers to assure competency and compliance.

The number of supported employment providers has increased over the past year from 62 to 75 supported employment CRPs. The Division continues its efforts to increase S.E. providers and anticipates the numbers of providers will increase. VR is actively pursuing a number of other providers for underserved areas across the state. While the number of CRPs remains adequate to serve the Division's number of supported employment clients, there remains a shortage of CRPs able to provide supported employment services in more rural areas and under-served communities and under-served populations of the state. The Division will continue to enter into supported employment agreements with appropriate state agencies, as well as Letters of Agreement with private and/or non-profit agencies which have the capabilities of providing quality service delivery and extended services in multiple counties. The Division will assertively seek those agencies that will provide supported employment services to persons being transitioned from institutional settings to the community and to work in competitive, integrated employment settings. The Division will also be studying in-house capabilities to provide supported employment services in more rural areas of the state utilizing the Division's facilities programs. This will include staff training to develop natural supports for extended services.

The Division will continue to seek community rehabilitation providers to provide supported employment services to under-served disability groups with the most significant disabilities.

The Division expects to serve in excess of 1300 clients through the supported employment program during the Fiscal Year 2017. The Division has consistently closed around 22% of the supported employment clients in successful employment. This would mean around 286 successful outcomes for FY2017.

For the provision of extended services to youth with disabilities who received supported employment services, the division will:

continue to collaborate and find partnership opportunities with DIDD, DMHSA, Department of Education, and other entities to continue outreach to transition students that may need supported employment.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Division will work with the Department of Education using the PETS program. These would offer work experiences that can assist transition students to a more positive and encouraging supported employment roadmap.

The Division will continue to work with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMMS) in continuing to align policies and funding that would support employment services.

The Division will convene a work group of VR staff, CRPs, and other entities to review policies, training, identify improvements and best practices, and propose plan for sustainability of the required WIOA budget appropriation.

The Division will work with disability specific stakeholders and advocacy groups such as the Autism Society and ARCs in conducting collaborative meetings to help identify sources of support.

The Division will continue to work with the IPS Learning Community to develop ways to best utilize IPS in working with transition students.

The Division will continue to encourage CRPs to become Employment Networks as possible funding source for on-going support needs. The Division will continue to train CRPs and VR staff to increase usage of SSA PASS plan.

The Division will assure that funds are made available will only be used to provide Supported Employment services to individuals who are eligible to receive such services.

The Division's case management system, TRIMS, has the ability to identify cases and expend the funds allotted as required by the RSA.



## APPENDIX 1

# PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Measure: Employment in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. After Exit	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	74%		74.5%	
Dislocated Workers	80.5%		81%	
Youth (Education or Employment)	74.5%		75%	
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange	69%		69.5%	
Adult Education	Baseline		Baseline	
Vocational Rehabilitation	58.5%		59%	
Measure: Employment in 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. After Exit	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	70.5%		71.5%	
Dislocated Workers	79%		79.5%	
Youth(Education or Employment)	69.5%		70%	
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange	68.5%		69%	
Adult Education	Baseline		Baseline	
Vocational Rehabilitation	54%		54.5%	
Measure: Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. After Exit	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	\$4250		\$4300	
Dislocated Workers	\$7250		\$7300	
Youth	\$2650		\$2700	
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange	\$4613		\$4713	
Adult Education	Baseline		Baseline	
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline		Baseline	

## APPENDIX 1

# PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Measure: Credential Attainment Rate	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	72.50%		73%	
Dislocated Workers	76.50%		77%	
Youth	64.50%		65%	
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult Education	Baseline		Baseline	
Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD		TBD	
Measurable Skill Gains	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline		Baseline	
Dislocated Workers	Baseline		Baseline	
Youth	Baseline		Baseline	
Wagner-Peyser/Labor Exchange	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult Education	TBD		TBD	
Vocational Rehabilitation	TBD		TBD	
Measure: Effectiveness in Serving Employers	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 16 / F Y 17 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Proposed/ Expected Level	P Y 17 / F Y 18 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline		Baseline	
Dislocated Workers	Baseline		Baseline	
Youth	Baseline		Baseline	
Wagner-Peyser/Labor Exchange	Baseline		Baseline	
Adult Education	Baseline		Baseline	
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline		Baseline	

## APPENDIX 1

# PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

### Appendix 1 (cont.)

TDLWD made the following assumptions in our preparation work. If any of our assumptions are proven inconsistent with the final regulations/guidance provided by the Departments, we reserve the right to revisit any and all projections and proposals contained with this appendix.

#### 1) General Concepts

- a. Participants – We used the definition proposed in the Notices of Proposed Rulemaking issued on April 16, 2015 (NPRM), which meant excluding self-service only Title III job seekers (no other TN job seekers were self-service only). However, many commenters objected to the exclusion of self-service only customers from the Participant definition. If the definition is modified, TN will have to propose different targets for Title III. In addition, converting historic Adult Education & Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) data has proven difficult in combining contact hours across program years and we continue to work with this data.
- b. Exit – We used the “pre-WIOA” definition of exit even though the NPRM proposed a different definition. The NPRM proposed that a Period of Participation not be extended by self-service (such as when a staff-assisted customer continues to utilize the system through self-service). TN objected to this proposal, as did other commenters, because it means that participants following a plan developed by staff, but doing so via self-service does not extend the period of participation and starts the measurement period while the person was still in service. This proved entirely too complicated to implement via an ad hoc process within the time frame allowed and TN utilized the pre-WIOA exit definition. If the final definition of exit does not match the pre-WIOA definition used in developing data for Appendix 1, TN will need to revisit the proposals.
- c. Common Periods of Participation – The NPRM requested feedback on whether “Common Periods of Participation” should be used in WIOA reporting across all six WIOA programs. However, the Department of Labor indicated that it intends to use Common Periods of Participation for its programs, even if the final regulations do not provide for common periods of participation that would also include AEFLA and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs. Although we anticipate implementing universal, integrated Periods of Participation eventually, if permitted, it was not possible to produce data that used this model within the time frame allowed. As such, we applied common Periods of Participation across all programs except AEFLA and VR in developing the data for the appendix.



## APPENDIX 1

# PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

- 2) Measure Definition/Calculation Issues – Most of the measure definition proposals proposed by the Departments in the Joint ICR were complete and appeared to conform to the statutory definitions. However, there were exceptions that impacted TN's work in developing data for the appendix.
- a. Credential Rate – The proposed specifications within the Joint ICR contained a conflict between different components of the guidance which made it impossible to follow the specifications in determining who was in the denominator. In the absence of clear guidance, we assumed that the denominators contained only those Participants who were enrolled in education or training intended to result in a recognized degree or certificate (and thus had a reasonable chance to be in the numerator). This allowed us to submit target proposals for the Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth populations. However, it was less clear how to use data from the Department of Education's RSA911 exit file to create targets for the VR population.
  - b. Measureable Skills Gain –MSG is a new measure under WIOA. The only WIOA program that previously had a measure similar to it was AEFLA. While the second State Plan Information Collection Request specifies that state are to propose MSG targets for VR, it was not clear how to use data from the Department of Education's RSA911 exit file.

TN was able to propose AEFLA MSG targets. These targets follow the Department's proposed methodology despite TWC's significant and previously commented upon concerns relating to the lack of a reasonable lag period before a participant was put in the denominator of the measure and proposal to only count gains in the "domain of significance" (the lowest educational functioning level) in the measure.

- 3) Performance Periods – The Departments did not propose performance periods for the WIOA measures so we assumed the periods would largely match the pre-WIOA performance periods, but "lagged" by one additional quarter, since WIOA measures focus primarily on the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit rather than the 1st and 3rd quarters. The following tables show the periods assumed for each measure:

Measure	Baseline From	Baseline To	P Y 16 From	P Y 16 To	P Y 17 From	P Y 17 To
Employed Quarter 2 after Exit and Median Earnings in Quarter 2 after Exit	2014Q3	2015Q2	2015Q3	2016Q2	2016Q3	2017Q2
Employed Quarter 4 after Exit and Credential Rate	2014Q1	2014Q4	2015Q1	2015Q4	2016Q1	2016Q4
Measureable Skills Gain	2015Q3	2016Q2	2016Q3	2017Q2	2017Q3	2018Q2

## APPENDIX 1

# PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

### 4) Other Issues –

- a. Program Changes – We were not able to assess the impact of recent and coming policy and program changes. This particularly involves the impact of the new WIOA requirement to spend 15% of federal vocational rehabilitative program grant funding on Pre-Employment Transition Services. It is not clear whether all students with disabilities receiving these services will be considered participants and thus be included in performance. If so, we will need to reconsider some of the targets proposed for Rehabilitative Services.
- b. Economic Changes – WIOA provides for the use of statistical models to help address the impact of changes in the participants being served and changes in the local economy. Because these models have not yet been built by the Departments, TN was unable to account for these changes. The proposals were set based on the assumption that TN's economy would remain strong.
- c. AEFLA Measureable Skills Gain – The significant increase in the proposed target for PY16 compared to the projected baseline is because the baseline performance was atypically low due to a program transition associated with bringing new AEFLA providers on board.

### ***Remaining Appendices***

[APPENDIX 2: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS](#)

[APPENDIX 3: WORKFORCE 360](#)

[APPENDIX 4: ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS – DRIVE TO 55 ACHIEVEMENT](#)

## SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

### ***WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN YOUR SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP) STATE PLAN***

In accordance with the Governor's Jobs and Economic Development Goal, Tennessee has taken a position to help seniors continue maintaining a sustainable life. One way the state is doing this is by providing useful community services and employment opportunities through the Senior Community Service Employment program (SCSEP) for seniors across the state. SCSEP fosters economic self-sufficiency through training, job placement, and guidance in unsubsidized jobs.

Tennessee's SCSEP plan serves as the road map for the implementation of the program among its stakeholders; this ensures compliance with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) rules and regulation. In addition, the plan will serve as a means of accountability to our participants, community, and funders. The SCSEP Plan will account for PY 2016-2020.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) is the primary funding vehicle for organizing, coordinating, and providing community-based services and opportunities for older Americans and their families in the United States. The OAA set out specific objectives for maintaining the dignity and welfare of older people. Listed below are two parts of Tennessee's infrastructure for administering the OAA and opening avenues to help leverage and maintain the health, lifestyle, and independence of seniors in the state:

Tennessee Commissioner of Aging and Disabilities or TCAD (a TDLWD partner) administers a system of services for those age 60 and over in their respective Planning and Service Areas (PSA). TCAD oversees multi-purpose senior center activities. This comprehensive and coordinated system of services is described in the Area Agencies on Aging and Disability's Plans. These services include Information and Assistance, Senior Centers, Nutrition Program for the Elderly, Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, National Family Caregiver Support Program, Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), Elder Rights, Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is the only federally-sponsored, job creation program targeted to low-income older Americans, which promotes the Governor's initiative to engage and educate employers on the value of hiring older workers. The program subsidizes part-time community service jobs for low-income individuals age 55 years and older, who have poor employment prospects. The participants often are placed in schools, hospitals, economic development initiatives, weatherization activities, law offices, conservation programs, and other sites. These sites translate into positions such as nurse's aides, and teacher's aides, library clerks, clerical workers, adult and child daycare assistants, campground recreational coordinators, maintenance workers, and many more occupations.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) funds and monitors SCSEP through the Older American's Act Title V Program. Currently, there are three (3) administrators or grantees in Tennessee —

1. Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD)
2. National Council of Aging (NCOA)
3. Senior Service of America, Inc. (SSAI), in Tennessee

TDLWD currently has six (6) sub-grantees that implement the SCSEP program. They are located in each of three regions – East, Middle and West Tennessee. NCOA and SSAI are assigned several counties and co-manage the program with TDLWD in several counties. SCSEP's sub-grantees are represented on state and local workforce development boards that provide strategic planning and oversight of workforce development activities across the state.

According to the 2010-2014 (American Community Survey Census) employment status of the civilian non-institutional population for Tennessee, the labor force participation rate of the 55+ population has increased from a low of 34.1% in 2009 to 39% in 2011. During the same period, the overall labor force participation rate increased less than one (1) percentage point. Data also shows that this population will continue to grow as the baby-boom generation reaches age 55.

In 2010-2014, Census estimated that 17.8% (over 1,000,000 individuals) of Tennessee's population had income levels below poverty. There were 60 of the 95 counties in the state that recorded higher poverty levels than the state average. Forty-five counties have poverty levels at 20% or higher. Thirteen of these are rural counties. Lake County has the highest poverty level at 41.9%. The 5 highest poverty level counties are as follows:

1. Lake 41.9%
2. Hancock 29.5%
3. Bledsoe, 28.5%
4. Fentress 28.1%
5. Cocke 27.8%

As the baby-boom generation ages, as the economy continues on the verge of improvement and as more older workers postpone retirement, the demand for employment and training services, as well as income support for low-income older people, will increase.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

Tennessee continues to increase employer engagement and will also increase exploration of on-the-job-experience (OJE) as a method of expanding employer engagement. While OJE has not been widely utilized by our sub-grantees in the past, Tennessee will actively promote OJE as a tool for sub-grantees to use in future program years to gain more unsubsidized jobs for participant job seekers.

### *Localities and Populations where Services are Most Needed*

SCSEP services are helpful to all Tennesseans who are eligible for the program, especially individuals who are forced to retire or who continue to face age discrimination. SCSEP participants bring the following to the program when they start: dependability, loyalty, a strong work ethic, transferrable skills, childcare skills, customer-service skills, a desire to learn and contribute, and maturity. In exchange, SCSEP provides these participants with updated job-skills training and work experience as well as much-needed income from part-time work at community service assignments with local government or 501(c) (3) nonprofit agencies. SCSEP also helps participants, with low literacy skills and low organizational skills, through referrals and through work experience, respectively. SCSEP tries to provide participants with skills needed to obtain an unsubsidized job helping them maintain self-sufficiency and engagement in their community.

### *I. Economic Projections and Impact. States must:*

- A. Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d)). Alternately, States may discuss this in the economic analysis section of strategic plan, if submitting a Combined State Plan.*

As noted in the Economic and Workforce Analysis (Appendix 2), the industries and occupations in the state that may provide employment opportunities in Tennessee through 2022 are: 1) Administrative and Support Services, 2) Health Care services, 3) Educational Services, 4) Professional and technical Services, 5) Food Services, 6) professional and business services and construction, and Administrative and Support Services sectors are projected to gain the most jobs. Education, and Professional and Business Services are the two industries in which older workers are expected to gain employment. Several occupations are prominent in Tennessee; however, the occupations that are the most prevalent among seniors in Tennessee are: office and administrative support, education, training, and library support, community and social Service occupations. During 2014, the state received calls from several governmental agencies requesting information about being a Host Agency for SCSEP. In addition, due to the high demands of older workers requesting employment, unmatched education levels, and interest to venture into a new trade, the state is determined to work closely with the workforce system to make sure that adequate resources are available for seniors.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

- B. Describe how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the types of skills training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))*

As previously stated, healthcare and the business services sectors are projected to have the fastest job growth between 2014 and 2022. This could translate into career opportunities for SCSEP participants. Tennessee understands the importance of creating an atmosphere where participants have multiple, career-sector opportunities and training opportunities needed to enter into attractive sectors, along with supporting the workforce system's employment goals for low-income older workers by building sustainable business relationships with industries across the state.

All SCSEP participants are required to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) at the time of enrollment. The IEP serves as a personal road-map to success and is designed to specifically assist the participant in meeting both personal and program goals. Each participant receives specialized training that fits under his or her IEP and is assigned to a host agency to develop or improve skills. The plan also determines if the Host Agency has met the participant's requirements. In addition, the Host Agency provides services to low-income older persons, to the economically disadvantaged and to organizations offering services which provide positive contributions to the welfare of the general community. Opportunities to serve other groups will also be provided through placement in schools, day-care programs, health and hospital programs, and agencies serving individuals with physical and developmental disabilities.

- C. Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR 641.325(c)).*

Due to the projected growth of the 55+ population entering the workforce, the labor force will place added strain on workforce investment resources and on the workforce system. The current job opportunities or occupational trends in Tennessee have shifted to the service industry in recent years according to the Non-Agricultural Employment Report provided by TDLWD. This includes healthcare, social assistance, leisure and hospitality jobs. In 2016, the projected occupation for individuals who are 55 and older will be in the professional and service occupations.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

SCSEP is designed for those who are not job-ready, but are low-skilled, and have a family income that falls under 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Individuals enrolling in the SCSEP program have a need for further education and/or training to perform work that is available in the local Tennessee labor market. Example of skill level of eligible individuals upon enrollment include limited or no computer skills, outdated clerical and bookkeeping skills, basic custodial and homemaker skills, heavy-equipment operators, no advanced manufacturing skills, or no job skills. Often, the participant can no longer physically do the same type of job that he or she has done in the past. Health and medical issues eliminate jobs that require tasks such as standing and/or sitting too long, lifting, bending, and walking. TDLWD, National Council on Aging, and Senior Services of America, Inc. collaborate with their respective host agencies (or work sites) to ensure that participants' and employers' needs and access to services are met.

### *II. Service Delivery and Coordination . States must:*

- A. Provide a detailed description of what actions will be taken to coordinate SCSEP with other programs. Alternately, States may discuss this in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of its placement in document, this section must include plans for:*
  - 1. Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA Title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e))*

WIOA requires SCSEP grantees to be partners in each local AJC and to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding, describing how services will be provided with the Local Workforce Development Board. In Tennessee, the U.S. Department of Labor allocates funds (to operate SCSEP through TDLWD and two national organizations. The national organizations are NCOA and SSAI. Tennessee is divided into 13 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs). SCSEP participants are referred to one of the 72 AJCs across the state providing comprehensive, workforce development-related activities, including updating interviewing skills, resume preparation, and job placement services.

In rural areas, SCSEP participants and other individuals 55 and older may also access services from one of TDLWD's Career Coaches (Mobile Units) with services similar to those found in the American Job Centers. These vehicles provide a mobile computer lab with Internet access, and they create a venue for workshops including résumé assistance and interviewing skills; the vehicle also serves as a recruitment center for employers. SCSEP Project Directors represent the Title V Program in each of the LWDAs. The cooperation of grantees on local boards has resulted in improved coordination between workforce agencies and has reduced "turfism." One of Tennessee's grantees has developed a presentation on how to navigate a job fair that can be used at a participant meeting. Topics may vary and can include interviewing techniques, resume writing tips, approaching the hidden job market, using social media in a job search and completing online job applications.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

2. *Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities to be carried out in the State under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(h))*

SCSEP grantees reach out to organizations that administer programs, under other titles of the Older Americans Act, to offer them the opportunity to become host agencies. SCSEP participants and other older workers will be directed to one of the local information and referral hotlines (administered by the Tennessee Areas Agencies on Aging and Disabilities offices), when these workers are seeking services or information. In addition, referrals will be made to congregate nutrition programs, transportation services, health and wellness programs, etc.

3. *Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(i))*

Tennessee prides itself for being engaged in actionable partnerships to leverage resources across agencies and enhance customer performance outcomes. These partnerships include:

- Coordinating with American Job Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and other members of the local disability community regarding activities, resources, and services for seniors with disabilities
- Participating in meetings, as appropriate, with senior service providers, both public and private
- Coordinating with local service providers and community stakeholders to assess needs and develop solutions for local transportation services
- Using 2-1-1 and other directories of service and supporting organizations to identify entities and programs in the community that provides referrals and support services to seniors. These directories are especially helpful for transition services when a participant's durational limit is approaching and project staff is working with him/her to develop a Transition Assessment & IEP.
- Networking with area faith-based organizations to conduct outreach to SCSEP-eligible individuals

If assistance is needed for training and employment services with the deaf and hard of hearing, interpreters and other communication-access services will be scheduled. Other partnerships include organizations providing assistance with subsidized housing, healthcare and medical services, transportation, the law, food, personal and financial counseling, interviewing, clothes, etc.

## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

4. *Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j))*

SCSEP sub-grantees actively seek job training opportunities leading to jobs available and offered by Community Colleges, Applied Colleges of Technology, non-profit organizations, such as Goodwill Industries, Adult Education programs and other training institutions. SCSEP will be an active member of the local business service teams.

5. *Actions the State will take to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system and the steps the State will take to encourage and improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)*

The partnership with SCSEP and the American Job Center system is essential to the success of SCSEP in Tennessee. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is developed to coordinate activities between SCSEP and the Workforce delivery system. The state will encourage One-Stop American Job Centers to hold regular partner meetings that include all SCSEP grantees operating in each local area to improve coordination with the Workforce delivery system. Sub-grantee strategies include:

- Listing all participant and staff openings with the American Job Centers
- Encouraging co-enrollment in WIOA, where possible, for participants seeking full-time employment
- Where feasible, requesting that the AJC in a given service areas serves as host agencies for SCSEP participants so that participants can provide administrative support to these offices while learning valuable job skills
- Requesting guidance from the American Job Centers on relevant skills required by local employers
- Participating in American Job Center offices' partner meetings
- Collaborating appropriately with AJC offices on employer outreach on behalf of senior Tennesseans and collaborating on continuous improvement of senior-service strategies
- Providing brief updates to Board staff and American Job Center offices' staff on SCSEP activities in the local workforce development area
- Where applicable, attending Board meetings regularly in the service area.



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

- Using local labor market information and staff information to identify occupations and industries with most promise for older job seekers, employers that are hiring or will soon be hiring, and employers moving to the local area
  - Referring participants who are ineligible for SCSEP to the closest American Job Center for job search assistance
6. *Efforts the State will make to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.*

Grantees or local projects will collaborate with the local workforce system and economic development councils in both urban and rural areas in order to provide education on the exceptional qualities that older adults bring to the workplace, to learn about potential employment growth opportunities, to discuss where older workers could add value to growth areas, and to increase job opportunities. SCSEP priority of service requires outreach to rural communities. Local project staff utilizes their connections with AJC's Veteran Representatives and Vocational Rehabilitation to promote SCSEP and learn about individuals who may meet the priority of service and eligibility requirements. Grantees will continue to engage organizations that serve hard to reach populations, such as those who are geographically or socially isolated and those whose primary language is not English.

- B. *Describe the long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 641.302(e)) (Alternately, the State may discuss this in the State strategies section of strategic plan if submitting a Combined Plan.)*

High performance is a priority for the state on every level—grantee, sub-grantees, host agencies, and employers. Several efforts are necessary in achieving these goals:

- Grantees will provide well-established partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce and employer organizations.
- Encouraging Tennessee grantees to establish relationships with their local, county and state economic development councils and accessing their press releases of future or growing business announcements.
- Provision of tools on each grantee's Web site for sub-grantees and older worker jobseekers. Tools may include resources and supportive services targeted for older Americans, resume help (tips, templates), information on starting a business, interviewing aids, job-search strategies for older workers (highlighting employers who hire older workers), etc.
- Continuous training of sub-grantees, with topics including: performance measures, data validation, budget management, Most-In-Need barriers, job search strategies, etc.

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- Encouragement of One-Stop Career Centers to hold job fairs targeted for older workers during Hire Older Worker Week in September.
- Encouragement of SCSEP sub-grantees to reach out to employers to educate them on the value of hiring older workers.
- Encouraging the use of sector strategies to assist lower-skilled workers with skill attainment and job placement.
- Encouraging further education, such as HSE, higher education, and technical training.
- Encouraging SCSEP sub-grantees to form local employer advisory boards.
- Promoting OJE as a tool for sub-grantees to use in future program years to gain more unsubsidized jobs for participant job seekers

*C. Describe the long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (c))*

According to the PY 2013 SCSEP Minority Report that was released by the Charter Oak Group, LLC, in 2015, Tennessee overall exceeded the Census minimum expectation for the African American serving 41.5% with the census percent being 21.8% and American Indian serving 0.7% with the census percent being 0.3%; however, there is room for growth in serving the Hispanic and Asian populations. Several strategies will be enacted to increase the awareness of SCSEP for these two populations. These include:

1. Monitoring of minority participations to assure performance negotiated goals are met
2. Reaching out to community and faith-based organizations that serve minority populations to recruit eligible individuals
3. Seeking eligible minorities by outreach efforts with Workforce System partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Social Service agencies
4. Using multi-lingual brochures and fliers to reach non-English speaking minority groups
5. For Hispanic and Asian population
  - Determining the cause(s) for the minority group's lower enrollment
  - Setting specific targets for the number of minority enrollees expected.
  - Identifying the steps to increase the enrollment of each minority group
  - Beginning monitoring minority enrollments on a quarterly basis
  - Prioritizing bilingual service delivery whenever possible to encourage full participation

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# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

- D. Provide a list of community services needed and the exact places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location(s) of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)*

SCSEP participants across Tennessee need a wide range of community services to meet their needs. Because they are economically insecure, they struggle with issues such as having enough food to eat, paying for medicine and out-of-pocket health expenses, housing, transportation, legal issues, and daily living expenses. Participants in need of assistance are referred to organizations such as food stamp offices, the Salvation Army, the Legal Aid Society, senior centers, and food banks. There are limited organizations with funding to provide these resources in rural areas. Therefore, SCSEP staff research and provide community service information available in both rural and urban areas for SCSEP participants.

In addition, TDLWD engage in partnerships with Tennessee Human Resource Agencies. These agencies produce community-needs assessments as well as use other assessments produced by groups such as the local United Way office or Community Action Agencies. These assessments are used to identify priority community needs.

- E. Describe the long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the State, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(k))*

Tennessee seeks to be the top-performing state in the nation, and it understands that there are necessary steps that need to be taken to achieve this goal. These steps include:

1. Work with new and existing host agencies in an effort to improve and increase in-demand training opportunities.
2. Increase partnerships with community colleges in the development of programs to meet the needs of participants.
3. Increase opportunities to meet participants needs through supportive services.
4. Increase awareness of the SCSEP to unsubsidized employers in an effort to promote employment opportunities for participants.
5. Expand economic opportunities through utilizing On the Job Experience (OJE) for participants.



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*F. Describe a strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f))*

High performance is a priority for the state on every level—grantee, sub-grantees, host agencies, and employers. Several efforts are necessary in achieving these goals:

- Grantees will provide well-established partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce and employer organizations.
- Encouraging Tennessee grantees to establish relationships with their local, county and state economic development councils and accessing their press releases of future or growing business announcements.
- Provision of tools on each grantee's Web site for sub-grantees and older worker jobseekers. Tools may include resources and supportive services targeted for older Americans, resume help (tips, templates), information on starting a business, interviewing aids, job-search strategies for older workers (highlighting employers who hire older workers), etc.
- Continuous training of sub-grantees, with topics including: performance measures, data validation, budget management, Most-In-Need barriers, job search strategies, etc.
- Encouragement of One-Stop Career Centers to hold job fairs targeted for older workers during Hire Older Worker Week in September.
- Encouragement of SCSEP sub-grantees to reach out to employers to educate them on the value of hiring older workers.
- Encouraging the use of sector strategies to assist lower-skilled workers with skill attainment and job placement.
- Encouraging further education, such as HSE, higher education, and technical training.
- Encouraging SCSEP sub-grantees to form local employer advisory boards.
- Promoting OJE as a tool for sub-grantees to use in future program years to gain more unsubsidized jobs for participant job seekers

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### *III. Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution. States must:*

#### *A. Describe the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by title V are most needed. (20 CFR 641.325 (d))*

- Coordination with the nine regional Tennessee Area Agencies on Aging organizations that provide curb-to-curb transportation for older Americans (60 and older) is vital in the rural areas to provide access to individuals to participate in SCSEP.
- Partnerships with various community and faith based organizations that provide food to older Americans to ensure SCSEP participants have access to proper nutrition such as Second Harvest Food banks, Senior Centers for congregate meals and local Help Centers is ongoing.
- Coordination with community and faith based organizations that serve older Americans such as Senior Centers, Meals-on-Wheels nutrition sites, and senior transportation, serve as host agencies across the state.
- Coordination with programs that serve individuals with special needs or disabilities such as Vocational Rehabilitation and employers such as Goodwill Industries to ensure a successful outcome with SCSEP.
- Use Tennessee's 2-1-1 and other directories of service and support organizations to identify entities and programs in the community that provide referrals and support services to seniors.
- Negotiate community service assignments for participants at AJC offices where feasible. Participants' training positions include greeters and resource assistants, administrative assistants, file/records clerks, custodians, office assistants, job developers, case managers and computer assistants.
- Negotiate for participant staff to be co-located at AJC offices where feasible. If participant assistants are trained as job developers or job developer assistants, they will be able to assist American Job Centers' older job seeker customers to find employment and enable workforce system staff to address other customers or service delivery needs. Participate in meetings, as appropriate, with senior service providers, both public and private.
- Provide information and referrals to the services of AJC Offices and SCSEP, respectively.
- Continue to utilize computer, adult basic education (ABE), HSE, continuing education, and other targeted training courses at community colleges, taking advantage of course discounts for individuals 55 to 64 years of age and free classes for individuals 65 years of age and older at community colleges. Libraries and community-based organizations also offer ABE, HSE, and ESL classes.

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- Work with LWDA Boards to encourage community colleges to create short-term education and training programs that are relevant for local targeted industries and high-priority occupations.
- List participant openings and staff openings on [www.Jobs4TN.gov](http://www.Jobs4TN.gov)
- Assist job-ready participants to register online in [www.Jobs4TN.gov](http://www.Jobs4TN.gov)
- Include Career Center's job seeker workshops and Job Clubs, when feasible, in Individual Employment Plans for participants who live near or have their host agency assignment near a Career Center office.
- Attend Board meetings when feasible.
- Provide updates to Boards on SCSEP activities and successes in the LWIA.

*B. List the cities and counties where the SCSEP project will take place. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate if and where the positions changed from the prior year.*

Title V of the Older Americans Act promotes geographical distribution of SCSEP positions so that all eligible persons have reasonable access to SCSEP. For Program Year (PY) 2014-2015, the U.S. Department of Labor allocates 20% of SCSEP funding to the TDLWD's 182 positions with the remaining 80% going to two national organizations— National Council on Aging (163 positions) and Senior Service America, Inc. (548 positions).

To measure the collective progress made by these state grantees toward an equitable distribution of program positions, an annual Equitable Distribution (ED) Report is developed in collaboration with all state grantees and sub-grantees. Each grantee operating in the state was contacted and asked to help develop the report. Telephone conversations provided a venue for the group to affirm a return to the regular practice of annual, Equitable Distribution meetings to achieve equality as indicated in the OAA Amendments. In addition, state operators meet on the national level to alleviate the disproportion noted.

Movement of positions from over-served to underserved locations within the state



# SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

## SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

County	State	NCOA	SSAI	Totals	County	State	NCOA	SSAI	Totals	County	State	NCOA	SSAI	Totals
Anderson			12	12	DeKalb		5		5	Hickman		5		5
Bedford			8	8	Dickson		8		8	Houston	2			2
Benton			4	4	Dyer	3		5	5	Humphreys	3			3
Bledsoe			3	3	Fayette			6	6	Jackson	1		2	3
Blount			13	13	Fentress	6			6	Jefferson			9	9
Bradley			13	13	Franklin			6	6	Johnson	3		2	5
Campbell	11			11	Gibson			10	10	Knox			41	41
Cannon		2		2	Giles			5	5	Lake			2	2
Carroll			6	6	Grainger			6	6	Lauderdale			5	5
Carter	5		8	13	Greene			14	14	Lawrence			9	9
Cheatham	5			5	Grundy			4	4	Lewis			3	3
Chester	3			3	Hamblen			10	10	Lincoln			5	5
Claiborne	8			8	Hamilton			41	41	Loudon			6	6
Clay			3	3	Hancock			3	3	Macon	2	3		5
Cocke			10	10	Hardeman	5			5	Madison			16	16
Coffee			10	10	Hardin	8			8	Marion			6	6
Crockett			3	3	Hawkins			11	11	Marshall			4	4
Cumberland	6		7	13	Haywood			5	5	Mauzy			9	9
Davidson		62		62	Henderson			6	6	McMinn			10	10
Decatur			4	4	Henry	4		3	3	McNairy	7			7

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# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

County	State	NCOA	SSAI	Totals	County	State	NCOA	SSAI	Totals
Meigs			3	3	Stewart	3			3
Monroe			9	9	Sullivan	7		20	27
Montgomery	4	8		12	Sumner		15		15
Moore			1	1	Tipton			7	7
Morgan	5			5	Trousdale		2		2
Obion	2		4	6	Unicoi			5	5
Overton			6	6	Union	5			5
Perry			1	1	Van Buren	2			2
Pickett			2	2	Warren		9		9
Polk			4	4	Washington	11		10	21
Putnam	5		8	13	Wayne			4	4
Rhea			6	6	Weakley	5		2	7
Roane			9	9	White			6	6
Robertson		7		7	Williamson		10		10
Rutherford		15		15	Wilson		9		9
Scott	5			5	<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>893</b>
Sequatchie			3	3					
Sevier			13	13					
Shelby	46		57	103					
Smith		3		3					

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# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

- C. *Describe any current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.*
- D. *Explain the State's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:*
  - 1. Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.
  - 2. Equitably serves both rural and urban areas.
  - 3. Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(a), 641.365, 641.520)
- E. *Provide the ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State. (20 CFR 641.325(a))*
- F. *Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who:*
  - 1. Reside in urban and rural areas within the State
  - 2. Have the greatest economic need
  - 3. Are minorities
  - 4. Are limited English proficient.
  - 5. Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))
- G. *Describe the steps taken to avoid disruptions to service for participants to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data becomes available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(i), 641.302(b))*



## SECTION VI: PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

# SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

### **SCSEP ASSURANCES**

1. Representatives of the State and area agencies on aging;

State and local boards under WIOA;

Public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b);

Social service organizations providing services to older individuals;

Grantees under Title III of OAA;

Affected Communities;

Unemployed older individuals;

Community-based organizations serving older individuals;

Business organizations; and

Labor organizations.

#### ***How to Submit Your SCSEP State Plan***

SCSEP grantees submitting Stand-Alone State Plans should submit plans directly to [scsep.stateplans@dol.gov](mailto:scsep.stateplans@dol.gov) with a copy to your Federal Project Officer.

SCSEP state grantees submitting Combined Plans should submit state plans using the Unified State Plan Portal. Outlined instructions for submitting state plans using the portal are forthcoming in guidance. Attached is a link to the FAQ's on the ETA website related to the April 1 state plan deadline <https://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/FAQs.cfm>.

#### ***Questions***

Please submit any questions on your SCSEP state plan to your Federal Project Officer.

